THE WIFE OF GENERAL BONAPARTE

JOSEPH TURQUAN

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[*In preparation.*

Josephine Bonaparte

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THE WIFE OF GENERAL BONAPARTE

BY JOSEPH TURQUAN

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY VIOLETTE MONTAGU WITH A PHOTOGRAVURE FRONTISPIECE AND SIXTEEN OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

MY readers will not find the Josephine of the Napoleonic legend described in this work ; they will find her as she really was. Although Napoleon, that is to say the man with mankind's failings and noble qualities[1] and not the almost supernatural being of legendary fame, has but little to fear from the searching light of history, we cannot say the same of his companion. However, as we can account for many events in Napoleon's life by showing Josephine in her true colours, we now propose to paint her portrait.

History is pitiless ; it does not gloss over the faults and failings of those individuals whose deeds and lives it has to record. History is not like a tender mother whose love for her offspring causes her to forget their past shortcomings. No, history must record both good and evil, not so much in order to punish or glorify the dead, as to instruct future generations. Such is the rôle of history, or rather of the historian. He is not permitted to consult his own opinions on the subject or person in question, to indulge in prejudices or give ear to party-spirit.

But it frequently happens that " men deceive them-

[1] " Mediocrity loves deceit, its most valuable weapon. Napoleon can only gain by being better known " (Stendhal, *Vie de Napoléon*).

selves," as Montaigne puts it; that is to say, the historian is wilfully blind and invents sophisms in order to excuse himself for adopting prejudiced opinions, which he fondly imagines are founded upon truth, and which he will soon be unable to relinquish. In writing this life of Napoleon's companion, I have endeavoured to be impartial and to avoid giving my own opinions; my chief object was to keep to the truth: is it not all-important that a portrait should resemble the original?

But is it allowable, is it right to tell everything, both good and evil (as we do when writing the biography of a man), when recording the sayings and doings of a woman? Every student of history knows that there have been many queens who have led anything but saintly lives. Why, then, should we be so careful to hide the faults of the *Wife of General Bonaparte*, the failings of this Josephine who herself was by no means a saint? It may be said with Lamartine, "History is bound to respect the laws of modesty." What can we reply to that learned author except that it is a pity that women sometimes forget to be modest?

A woman's honour is such a valuable possession—ah! why does she not learn to protect it herself? Must we be more careful of her good name than she is herself? And then we must remember that this woman was the wife of the hero of the *armée d'Italie*, the wife of the Emperor! That is the very reason why her faults are less excusable. It is impossible for history to be indulgent; history must tell everything, both good and evil, and that without partiality.

It would seem as if the empress Josephine's biographers[1]

[1] M. Joseph Aubenas, M. Imbert de Saint-Amand.

were not always impartial; they portray Napoleon's companion more as she ought to have been than as she was in reality. They endow her with all sorts of good qualities, although they are perfectly well aware that she never possessed them; they do not mention her faults—or if they do, they only just touch upon them—and she had several; and yet we cannot think that those faults were unknown to her biographers. But it would seem as if historians, with one accord, had made up their minds to be silent concerning her faults and to be extremely indulgent towards certain deeds which would have dishonoured any other name than hers. Is it not annoying to those who know the truth to listen to the long rigmarole of falsehoods and trite sayings with which so many authors have tried to disguise the personality of Napoleon's first wife? Is it not vexatious to read of an imaginary Josephine, as depicted by certain writers of historical romances and those authors who are incapable of holding any opinions of their own, of an idealized Josephine dressed up to resemble one of the staid models beloved by Berquin or Bouilly, the Josephine favoured by a certain political party, capable of playing a part to suit the needs of the dynasty, or a lady sufficiently proper to suit the fashionable society of which she was the leader?

Is it not time to show her in her true colours?

I will now show you another portrait of Josephine, less flattering, no doubt, but a better likeness. This portrait differs in many respects from those with which we are already familiar. I am sorry for it, but whose fault is it? History, as well as life, is full of stern realities; the reality is not always very edifying, but is that a reason why it should be misrepresented?

In this work I have left facts to speak for themselves as much as possible; I have compiled and compared divers documents scattered among the recollections and memoirs of contemporary writers; and if, after doing my best and taking all this trouble, the portrait does not please, the fault will perhaps lie more with the original than with the artist. At all events it will be a speaking likeness.

That, doubtless, is its only merit.

Joseph Turquan.

CONTENTS

PART I

THE *CITOYENNE* BONAPARTE

CHAPTER I

State of Paris after the 9th *Thermidor*—Barras gives a ball: the widow Beauharnais—The *citoyenne* Tallien gives a *soirée*: General Bonaparte—The *citoyenne* Beauharnais at Croissy—Her relations with Barras—She makes the acquaintance of General Bonaparte—They immediately become great friends—Josephine tries to persuade General Bonaparte to marry her—Letter from Bonaparte—Betrothal—The command of the *armée d'Italie* is not the reward for marrying the widow Beauharnais—Carnot's evidence—False rumours—Mme. Letizia objects to her son's marriage—The truth concerning the episode with the notary Raguideau and other legends . . . . . *Page* 1

CHAPTER II

Marriage of the widow Beauharnais with General Bonaparte—The *hôtel* in the rue Chantereine—Bonaparte's love only meets with indifference from Josephine—The general starts for the wars—Correspondence between the young couple—Bonaparte begs his wife to join him in Italy—Josephine prefers to stay and amuse herself in Paris—She pretends to be *enceinte* in order to be allowed to remain—Bonaparte's affectionate solicitude for his wife when he learns that she is ill—He accuses himself of selfishness for having asked her to come to him—Josephine is obliged to confess that she told a lie—Her coldness for her husband—*Fête* given at the Luxemburg on receiving the flags won from the enemy by the *armée d'Italie*—The *citoyenne* Bonaparte reigns supreme—Josephine decides to start—A piteous scene—Incidents during the journey 39

CHAPTER III

Josephine arrives in Milan—The Serbelloni palace—Mme. Bonaparte's court at Milan—General Bonaparte makes another campaign—He summons his wife to Verona—Anecdote concerning Fortuné, Josephine's pet dog—Josephine does not allow her husband to open her letters—She starts and rejoins the general at Brescia—She returns to Milan and is attacked by the Austrians outside Mantua—Bonaparte's love for his wife—First suspicions—The general's letters to Josephine—Disillusion and despair—Josephine goes to amuse herself at Genoa instead of waiting for her husband at Milan—Josephine's character—Josephine's lover, Lieutenant Hippolyte Charles—Forgiveness—General Murat gives a *déjeuner*. . *Page* 71

CHAPTER IV

Bonaparte's passionate love for his wife changes to calm affection—Josephine wishes to return to Paris—Her son Eugène comes to see her at Milan—Bonaparte makes him his aide-de-camp—Negotiations are commenced for the treaty of Leoben—*Fêtes* at Milan—Josephine no longer talks of leaving Italy—Excursion to the Lago Maggiore—Mme. Bonaparte's life at Milan—Her *salon*—Sojourn at the castle of Montebello—All the members of the Bonaparte family come to Montebello in order to be with the general—Pauline Bonaparte marries General Leclerc—The two sisters-in-law are not good friends—Rival flirts—Mme. Bonaparte and Mme. Leclerc visit a wounded warrior—Portrait of Josephine—Death of Fortuné—Visit to Passeriano—Departure—Arrival in Paris . . 107

CHAPTER V

The *Directoire* gives a *fête* in honour of General Bonaparte—*Fête* given by the *citoyen* Talleyrand, Foreign Minister—Mme. de Staël makes advances to General Bonaparte—Josephine thinks her husband's behaviour vulgar—The general plans his expedition to Egypt—He forbids his wife to discuss politics—Marriage of Mlle. Emilie de Beauharnais to M. de Lavalette—Departure for Toulon—A carriage accident—The fleet weighs anchor—Mme. Bonaparte starts for Plombières—Purchase of La Malmaison—M. Hippolyte Charles at La Malmaison—Gossip—M. Gohier advises Mme. Bonaparte to divorce her husband—He refuses to allow his son to marry Hortense, which Josephine was anxious he should do—News reaches Josephine that Bonaparte has landed—Josephine does not know what to do—Echoes from the banks of the Nile—Eugène de Beauharnais . . . 137

CHAPTER VI

Josephine is alarmed on hearing that her husband has landed—She decides to go and meet him—Bonaparte returns to Paris by the Bourbonnais route while Josephine choses the Lyons route—Grief and anger of the general—He refuses to see Josephine when she returns to Paris from Lyons—Affecting scenes—A stroke of genius—Bonaparte capitulates—Reconciliation—Disappointment of the Bonaparte family—Josephine tries to win the family over to her side—Her plans for Hortense—Josephine's talents as a hostess—She helps the general to prepare his *coup d'Etat*—Bonaparte gives a *soirée*—M. and Mme. Gohier—The 18th *Brumaire*—Aversion of Mme. Bonaparte *mère* for Josephine 172

PART II

THE WIFE OF THE FIRST CONSUL

CHAPTER I

Mme. Bonaparte moves into the Petit-Luxembourg palace—The polished manners of the old French nobility once more become the fashion—Mme. Bonaparte *mère* and Josephine—Josephine advises Murat to ask for Caroline Bonaparte's hand in marriage—Negotiations—Marriage of Murat and Caroline—Portrait of Caroline—History of a pearl necklace—Josephine's embarrassment—A lie settles everything—Josephine accepts bribes—The First Consul leaves the Petit-Luxembourg palace for the Tuileries—Review of troops in the cour du Carrousel—Josephine passes her first night at the Tuileries—She receives the diplomatic corps—Josephine's voice—Strife between Josephine and Lucien—Lucien resigns the post of Secretary of State for the home department in order to become French ambassador to Madrid—A curious *soirée* at the Tuileries—Josephine makes fresh plans for Hortense's marriage—Lucien will have nothing to do with her—Hortense—Her affection for Duroc—Josephine forces her to marry Louis—An odious rumour is contradicted. . . 199

CHAPTER II

Marriage of Hortense—Josephine begins to think—The First Consul dismisses some of his wife's friends—Josephine's grief—The *salon* of the Tuileries—M. de Talleyrand—The consular court is formed—A staff of honour is also formed—Etiquette is introduced—Mme. Bonaparte's maids of honour

—Mme. de Rémusat—Reception at the consular court—Mme. Bonaparte and the royalists—The women of the *ancien régime*—Letter from *Monsieur*, the comte de Lille—An extraordinary ambassadress: the duchesse de Guiche—Breakfast at La Malmaison—Josephine is delighted to be allowed to negotiate—Reply of the First Consul—The duchesse de Guiche receives orders to leave Paris—Bonaparte is mistaken concerning Josephine's influence in the faubourg Saint-Germain—Mme. de Montesson—Family squabbles—Josephine's supersitions—Scene caused by a broken snuff-box . . . . . *Page* 244

CHAPTER III

La Malmaison—Josephine's indolence—Improvements at La Malmaison—Mme. Bonaparte grants audiences—She chooses her *protégés* without displaying much discernment—Shady speculations—Josephine's tears—A letter of introduction to Mme. Bonaparte—Mme. Hulot visits La Malmaison—Anger of the First Consul—Charming domestic scene—An incident with a dwarf—Bonaparte loves to play tricks—Josephine does not relish his tricks—Theatre of La Malmaison—Josephine has a fright—A false alarm—Excursion to Butard—Bad temper—Josephine's extravagance—Thirty-eight bonnets in one month!—Mme. Bonaparte dares not confess her debts—Thievish tradespeople—The First Consul's grief at his wife's extravagance—Josephine's dresses—Mme. Bonaparte is always short of money 274

CHAPTER IV

Ceremony at Notre-Dame for the enthroning of the *Concordat*—Mme. Bonaparte's livery—Mme. Hulot takes her seat in the gallery reserved for the First Consul's family—Mme. Bonaparte's good taste and indulgence—Hunting-party at Mortefontaine—Family precedence—An unfortunate episode—A journey in Belgium—Accident—The people display genuine enthusiasm—Present from the city of Brussels to Mme. Bonaparte—Return—Jealousy of Josephine—Dread of a divorce—Mlle. Duchesnois and Mlle. Georges—A midnight expedition—Panic and defeat—The First Consul cross-examines Mme. de Rémusat at the camp of Boulogne—Gossip—Mme. Bonaparte's extraordinary leniency—Mme Bonaparte makes M. de Talleyrand marry his old mistress—Attempt on the 3rd *nivôse*—Josephine narrowly escapes losing her life—Mme. Bonaparte and Fouché—She receives a sum of one thousand francs a day for spying upon her husband 304

CHAPTER V

Bonaparte is made consul for life—Grief of Josephine and delight of the Bonaparte family—Josephine's selfish fears—The question of heredity—More family squabbles—" We must not always speak the truth "—A dangerous topic of conversation—Josephine and Lucien—Another journey to Plombières—Politics and silken robes—Fashions—Arrest of the duc d'Enghien—Josephine's anxiety—She pleads for the duc d'Enghien—Fresh endeavours—Murat—Josephine sheds tears on learning of the death of the last of the Condés—Sad days at La Malmaison—" We must make the people forget this event "—Josephine's joy—Lucien marries Mme Jouberthon—Bonaparte's grief—Josephine comforts him—Gossip 335

INDEX 367

ILLUSTRATIONS

JOSEPHINE BONAPARTE . . . . . *Frontispiece*
From an Aquatint in the collection of Mr. Godefroy Mayer, Paris

FACING PAGE

HORTENSE DE BEAUHARNAIS, DAUGHTER OF JOSEPHINE, WIFE OF LOUIS BONAPARTE, KING OF HOLLAND AND MOTHER OF NAPOLEON III 12

MADAME MÈRE 34
From the collection of A. M. Broadley, Esq.

MADAME RÉCAMIER 62
From an engraving in the collection of A. M. Broadley, Esq.

JOACHIM MURAT, AND HIS WIFE CAROLINE BONAPARTE, KING AND QUEEN OF NAPLES 102

PAULINE BONAPARTE 126
From a pastel in the possession of Mr. John Lane

LAZARE-NICOLAS-MARGUERITE-CARNOT . . . 140
From the collection of H. H. Raphael, Esq., M.P.

MADAME DE STAËL 144

TALLEYRAND 160

JOSEPH EMMANUEL SIÉYÈS 184

LUCIEN BONAPARTE 202
From the collection of H. H. Raphael, Esq., M.P.

BONAPARTE FIRST CONSUL 216
From a coloured line engraving, drawn and engraved by Chataiguier, in the Barras collection of H. H. Raphael, Esq., M.P.

JERÔME NAPOLEON 230
From an engraving in the collection of A. M. Broadley, Esq.

MADAME TALLIEN 248
From an engraving in the collection of A. M. Broadley, Esq.

FACING PAGE

MARSHAL LANNES 252
From an engraving in the collection of A. M. Broadley, Esq.

FOUCHÉ, DUC D'OTRENTE 332
From an engraving

THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE 360
From the collection of A. M. Broadley, Esq.

PART I

THE *CITOYENNE* BONAPARTE

THE WIFE OF GENERAL BONAPARTE

CHAPTER I

State of Paris after the 9th *Thermidor*—Barras gives a ball: the widow Beauharnais—The *citoyenne* Tallien gives a *soirée*: General Bonaparte—The *citoyenne* Beauharnais at Croissy—Her relations with Barras—She makes the acquaintance of General Bonaparte—They immediately become great friends—Josephine tries to persuade General Bonaparte to marry her—Letter from Bonaparte—Betrothal—The command of the *armée d'Italie* is not the reward for marrying the widow Beauharnais—Carnot's evidence—False rumours—Mme. Letizia objects to her son's marriage—The truth concerning the episode with the notary Raguideau and other legends.

THE events of the 9th *Thermidor* had produced a sudden feeling of relief and security; the entire population of Paris was seized with an extraordinary desire to forget the past and enjoy the present. The fever of the last few months gave place to delirium, which soon became frenzy—a frenzy affecting all classes of society, those of humble origin as well as those of aristocratic descent. Balls and entertainments were the order of the day: public balls with entrance-fees ranging from five or twenty *sols* to five *livres!* . . . private balls given by the army contractors, who had filled their pockets at the expense of the unfortunate troops; balls given by corn merchants, who,

during the famine, had monopolized the supply of grain and had grown fat in the process ; balls given by money-lenders who had seized the golden opportunity and had made their fortunes ; crape balls for those who still wore mourning for relations who had been mown down by the guillotine ; merry balls given by those enterprising individuals who had climbed to the topmost branches of the political tree ; it was, indeed, as the actor Dazincourt said : the Regency of the Terror. Barras gave official receptions and balls at the palace of the Luxemburg ; they were strange gatherings, where erstwhile grand-dames, grass-widows of still living *émigrés*, Frenchmen and foreigners, and even a sprinkling of honest folk, capered and courtesied to each other in a frenzy of delight and light-heartedness ! There was Mme. Tallien, formerly Mme. de Fontenay, who later became the princesse de Chimay, " one of those women whose charms are all-powerful, Mme. Tallien, who might be seen at Ranelagh any fine day arrayed as Diana, with her figure exposed to all beholders, her feet shod with buskins, and clothed, if one can use the expression, in a tunic which did not reach farther than her knee."[1] Mme. Tallien saunters through the salons escorted by the young pleasure-loving *Directeur ;* the latter, quite as proud of being one of the handsomest men in Paris as of having as mistress the creature who is called the most beautiful woman in the capital, carelessly places his arm round the waist of her who was but lately known as *Our Lady of Thermidor*. She, leaning with feline grace upon the arm of the splendidly attired *ci-devant* vicomte de Barras, receives the homage of her liege guests.

[1] Duc de Broglie, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 23.

The tour of inspection concluded, the crowd breaks up into little groups : the financiers, gesticulating violently, continue the shady speculations commenced but a few hours ago on the steps of the *Perron*, while[1] the *jeunesse dorée*, that flock of silly youths " clad in lace-ruffles and be-ribboned knee-breeches which always follows in Fréron's train,"[2] tries to do its very best to imitate the inimitable *citoyen* Trénis, that drawing-room Vestris who sets the fashion in dancing ; having chosen their partners from among the host of pretty dancers intoxicated with excitement, pleasure, and undefined longings, these youths whirl them round the room amid a ripple of laughter to the musical accompaniment of harp and violin. Everybody, men and women, impostors and dupes, thieves and victims, tyrants and slaves, dance, enjoy themselves, and eat and drink as if they were paid to do so. This is indeed the temple of pleasure, and the temple of taste, of the taste of the day—and very bad taste, too. Fréron gives the tone for the male worshippers at the throne of Fashion, while Mme. Tallien tells her high-priestesses what they ought to wear. Here that *incroyable* of all the *incroyables*, whose somewhat apish physiognomy can scarcely be seen for his huge ruffle containing four ells of muslin, the thick mass of flaxen curls, and the crowd of young imbeciles which forms his body-guard, first saw the light of day or rather night, amid the dizzy dance and the buzzing of a hundred devil-bewitched violins, between a gavotte by Glück and a melody from the pen of Garat. There we see for the first time those

[1] The *Perron*, or staircase of disjointed, worn-out steps which formerly existed at the end of the rue Vivienne, on which stood all those who got their living by stock-jobbing.

[2] De Goncourt, *La Société française pendant le Directoire*, p. 297.

strange Roman and Spartan fashions, those spencers which originally hailed from England, those wigs which dated from the days of the guillotine ;[1] and those women, who come from nobody knows where, attired *à la Diane* or as vestals, with tunics *à la Minerve* and bodices *à la Galathée*, amid this galaxy of mythological characters, cast languishing glances and courtesy invitingly to their partners.

But some of the ladies do not dance. Look at that little group : what pretty faces ! What bewitching smiles ! How much genuine French charm and grace we notice in those head-dresses and Greek costumes ! There is the *citoyenne* Hainguerlot, there is the *citoyenne* Hamelin, and the *citoyenne* Mailly de Château-Renault, and the *citoyenne* de Navailles, and the *citoyenne* de Staël ; there also is the very beautiful and very youthful *citoyenne* Saint-Fargeau, the *Daughter of the Nation*. All these women, who belong to no particular class, form a class to themselves in the *salon* of the *Directeur* who, himself, belongs to no particular class of society. And that dark-haired woman in the corner over there, that woman whose locks have an auburn tinge, whose eyes are full of the divine languor of the Creole—who is she ? Who is her husband ? Her husband ? He was forgotten long ago. And yet it was not so very long ago since General Beauharnais fell a victim to the guillotine. His widow does not seem to mourn his loss. Why should she do so ? Had not long months of separation during her husband's lifetime taught her to bear the final separation

[1] " Certain foolish women hastened to purchase the fair locks of the guillotine's victims in order to adorn their own heads with the precious spoil " (De Goncourt, *La Société française pendant le Directoire*, p. 408).

by death ? . . . But what is the good of stirring up the embers of past and long extinct passions ? We must forget—and that right soon—forget these sad memories. Is not everybody trying to forget ? Is not life made up of forgetting ? Do not *victims' balls* take place nearly every day in Paris ? After so much grief and anguish, everyone feels the need of telling himself and his neighbour that he is still alive and anxious to enjoy life as much as possible. Yes, that handsome dark-haired woman is the widow Beauharnais, who has been taken to Barras' ball by the *citoyenne* Tallien ; and the chances of love will lead her, after having been loved by Hoche, Barras, and one or two less important personages, to the throne of France. Do you see that little officer over there in his shabby uniform still smelling of gunpowder, with his sallow skin almost sticking to his bones, his lank hair plastered down on his temples, with sunken eyes which flash and blaze with some hidden fire from time to time ?

He is talking to the mistress of the master of France. Poor fellow ! he humbles himself to speak to this very important personage ; he has just been introduced to her. The *citoyenne* Tallien, who is always gracious, nay more, patronizing, invites this young out-at-elbow officer, notwithstanding his shabby appearance, to come to a soirée which she is soon going to give. The young man thanks her, bows, then moves away and is soon lost among the crowd of guests.

He takes care not to forget to go to the sumptuous dwelling in the Cours-la-Reine, at the corner of the Allée des Veuves in the Champs-Elysées. It is there that the beautiful *citoyenne* reigns in all her majestic beauty, with the self-assurance which always belongs to those who

have been lucky in life, especially to those who have no scruples, and makes all Paris talk of her wonderful costumes, rich equipages, her follies and the follies of her lovers. The female friends and enemies who worship at her throne are equally unscrupulous. Fashionable *parvenues*, these women of young France only yesterday still wore caps and aprons ; they are now *ladies*, or rather they try to ape the manners of a lady. 'Tis a pity ! for, although they cover their coarse, red hands with gloves, they cannot hide their origin ; and these women, who by dint of taking infinite pains, manage to avoid using expressions dear to Mme. Angot, are betrayed by their hands ; they reek of money and stock-jobbing as they reek of musk, benzoin, and bergamot, as they once reeked of fish or tallow-dips. And yet we see them there, dressed up to the nines and enjoying life ; and their husbands, it is said, are delighted to empty their pockets into the golden stream which trickles between the pretty fingers of the fashionable beauty.

Is there any reason why these men and women should not be happy ? Does not the beautiful *citoyenne* Tallien repay them with a sweet smile as she saunters past them ? Give and take—that is life's motto.

We see something else beside coarse hands in the *salons* of the Chaumière : we see fine, white hands ; all the society of the Luxemburg is present to-night ; the *citoyenne* Lepelletier Saint-Fargeau, the *citoyenne* de Staël, the *citoyenne* Beauharnais and several other dames belonging to the old nobility, intoxicated with the pleasure of dancing, are enjoying themselves.

The brigadier-general Bonaparte threads his way among the groups of talkers. Timid people always feel

less shy when surrounded by strangers. For the general is still very shy. However, he greets the *châtelaine* of this magnificent dwelling with a certain air of self-possession. He gets through the task of thanking his hostess for her invitation more creditably than he could have dared to hope. This fact gives him courage to continue. He has a favour to ask of the beautiful *citoyenne*.

What is it? Poor fellow! he asks her . . . he is ashamed of his paltry request . . . he asks her to help him to obtain gratis two or three ells of the cloth used for soldiers' coats, so that he may have a new uniform made for himself. Cloth, like soldiers, soon wears out on the battlefield. He knows that he has no right to the cloth; the decree of *fructidor, an III* is explicit on that point, and General Bonaparte is not on active service just at present. But the *directeur* Barras' mistress is more powerful than the law; "she had been struck by the look in the general's eyes."[1] She smiles—she can smile so bewitchingly! and she promises: was she ever known to refuse anybody anything?

The friendly reception accorded to the young general by the Queen of Beauty and of the Republic gives him a little more self-assurance. He no longer thinks of his threadbare uniform, for he knows that he will soon have a bran-new one; we who are unfamiliar with poverty are too apt to forget that want and misery can quell the proudest spirit. He throws off all reserve and begins a witty conversation with her. He, who only a few minutes

[1] Stendhal, *Vie de Napoléon*, Vol. I, p. 75. (Notes concerning Napoleon communicated to Stendhal by a woman of learning.) Barras gives another version, but his assertions are not to be believed on account of his animosity against Napoleon. See Vol. I, p. 284, of his *Mémoires*.

ago, was gloomy and taciturn, becomes cheerful and talkative. He seizes one of Mme. Tallien's hands, a soft, smooth, white hand, so soft and smooth that not even the hard golden stream which trickles ceaselessly between the fingers can harden it ; and then he reads her future from the lines in her hand. A little crowd gathers round the fortune-teller, for it was the fashion in those days to be superstitious ; everybody believed in superstitions ; it was likewise the fashion to consult soothsayers and crystal-gazers. Laughter ripples among the little group of listeners on hearing the pale-faced general's witty sallies. But look at the beautiful widow Beauharnais.

She has drawn nearer ; she does not try to conceal the interest with which she listens to the fortune-teller ; her eyes are fixed upon him ; she seems absorbed in his predictions for the future. She asks him if he will be so kind as to tell her fortune. But General Bonaparte will not do so to-night, for he has just begun to examine the hand of General Hoche, to whom he says :

" General, you will die in your bed ! " [1]

A burst of laughter and derision greets this news. The fortune-teller seizes the opportunity in order to make his bow and to disappear among the crowd of guests.

At that time the widow Beauharnais did not go much into society, where she was little known ; but she attended a good many balls, as was the fashion to do in those days. She went to the ball given at the hôtel Longueville, where Mme. Hamelin, like herself of Creole descent, her rival in beauty and equally keen for admiration, was such a frequent guest. She also went to the ball given at the hôtel Thélusson, situated at the end of

[1] J. G. Ouvrard, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 20.

the rue Cérutti, facing the *boulevard*, where the staid Mme. de Damas also appeared under the pretext of being obliged to chaperon her daughter, and who said of the beautiful Creole that "she did not like people who allowed their misfortunes to lower them."[1] Mme. de Beauharnais, like all the women of her time, loved dissipation; she went to Idalie, Tivoli and wherever people flocked in order to be amused. But Barras' house was the *citoyenne* Beauharnais' favourite haunt. Everybody liked going there because they enjoyed themselves so much! In order to gain admittance one must neither be overscrupulous, nor too particular as to whom one met there.[2] "It was no place for a woman, especially for a young woman; and the females whom one met there were neither pleasant to talk to nor to look at."[3] But Barras was a useful friend to have, so it was just as well to cultivate him; Mme. Tallien was also of use, as well as the train of men and women who followed her wherever she went and whose chief duty was to play the fool on all occasions; it was just as well not to offend these people if you had any requests to make. "Mme. de Beauharnais was not well off," says Mme. de Rémusat," and her love of dress and luxury made her dependent upon those who could help her to satisfy her passion."[4] And, after all, had she any right to be particular as to whom she met? . . . And so she attended these receptions, not only because she liked to enjoy herself, but

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 366.

[2] "Barras was completely hedged round by the leaders of the most crapulous anarchy, the most debased aristocrats, low women, bankrupt stock-brokers, mistresses, and minions of all sorts. The most infamous scenes were enacted at his house" (*Mémoires de La Révellière*, Vol. I, p. 338).

[3] *Mémoires d'une inconnue*, p. 112.

[4] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 146.

because she wanted to get on in the world—one might almost say she was obliged to do so, if it were not a woman's first duty to protect her reputation before thinking of anything else. She herself gave small receptions from time to time, but they were only for her own particular friends. On being released from prison after *Thermidor*, in 1794, she took a country house at Croissy. To this same village chance brought M. and Mme. de Vergennes with their two daughters, one of whom was later to marry General de Nansouty, and the other, who married M. de Rémusat, became the intimate friend of Mlle. Hortense de Beauharnais who was a few years her junior. Chance also brought M. Etienne Pasquier to Croissy; this gentleman, formerly councillor of the *parlement de Paris*, afterwards became prefect of the police under Napoleon; having married his cousin during the Reign of Terror, he had migrated into the country in the hope of finding a shelter from the redoubtable persecutions of that time. Mme. de Beauharnais' house was close to that of M. and Mme. Pasquier. In 1795, Mme. de Beauharnais "came there but seldom," says M. Pasquier, "only once a week, in fact, when she received Barras together with the numerous suite which always followed him wherever he went. We used to see baskets of provisions arrive early in the morning, then mounted *gendarmes* began to ride up and down the road from Nanterre to Croissy, for the young *Directeur* usually arrived on horseback.

"Mme. de Beauharnais' house, as is the custom among Creoles, was furnished with a certain amount of luxury; there was a great deal of show, but little comfort. The kitchen was filled with game, poultry and rare fruits

HORTENSE DE BEAUHARNAIS, DAUGHTER OF JOSEPHINE, WIFE OF LOUIS BONAPARTE, KING OF HOLLAND, AND MOTHER OF NAPOLEON III

(the most terrible famine was rife at that time) and yet there were not enough pots and pans to cook the viands ; and glasses and plates had to be borrowed from our own humble store." [1]

People naturally began to gossip about Mme. de Beauharnais' goings-on, and "her reputation was seriously compromised." [2]

General Bonaparte, as we have already seen, attended the fêtes at the Luxemburg. Did he go there in order to be amused, as is so natural to a man of his age who has seen nothing of life except war and knows nothing of the world outside his own profession ? No, the young general did not belong to the common herd which wastes its time in dissipation. Was it on account of the velvety eyes of the widow Beauharnais ? No, he had already seen her, he had already spoken to her at the fête given by Mme. Tallien ; but as yet he scarcely knew her. He went there in order to show himself, in order to see that he was not forgotten whenever there happened to be any promotions and favours about. It was not so very long ago, during the reign of Louis XV, since royal mistresses had had the distribution of all such valuable emoluments : Soubise and Broglie were well aware of that fact ; France learnt it to her cost. The reign of the favourites still continued under Barras, and Mme. Tallien was the dispenser of the government's favours or pardons ; she it was who nominated the recipients, granted favours and rewarded deserving merit. And so it was that her court was always well attended ; as usual, the least deserving were the most pushing and the most successful.

[1] Chancelier Pasquier, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 118.
[2] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 138.

The *citoyenne* Beauharnais was constantly to be seen with this lovely, powerful woman. She also was beautiful, but much less so than the *citoyenne* Tallien, and her self-possession was far from equalling the proud calm of the sovereign of the Luxemburg. And yet people whispered, or rather said, without however being able to prove their assertions, notwithstanding the fact that appearances were against her, that this friend was a rival, and that she also was beloved by Barras, that she was his mistress.[1] But this was only gossip, and people gossip about everything ! Be that as it may, the young General Bonaparte, who now had a new uniform thanks to the influence of *citoyenne* Tallien and who, thanks to his own merits and to Barras' favour, had been made *General Vendémiaire* only two days ago, was seen more and more frequently in the *salons* of the *Directeur*. It was there that he really became acquainted with the widow Beauharnais. His determined repression of the sections' act of insurrection had just brought him into public notice. He was the hero of the day. The reception accorded to him in Barras' *salons* was both cordial and enthusiastic. The women, weary, it seemed to him, of hearing their own praises, joined forces to compliment him upon his splendid behaviour. There was not a woman there who was not

[1] Général Thiébault, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 4. In another passage, Thiébault says, concerning the coronation : " Nevertheless I myself believe, and many others think with me, that Josephine was Barras' mistress at one time " (Vol. III, p. 364). Such assertions are quite as difficult to prove as to deny. However, we must read Josephine's life-story and then judge for ourselves.

N.B.—Barras' memoirs having been published since I wrote the above, and the confessions, not to say boastings, of the debauched *Directeur*, which are quite as devoid of reticence as they are filled with misplaced pride, prove once and for all that Mme. de Beauharnais was his mistress.

dying to make his acquaintance. The *citoyenne* Beauharnais was by no means behindhand in this matter; and as pretty things, especially when uttered by a pretty woman, always charm and tickle a man's vanity, especially when that man happens to be young and when he has not had time to become *blasé* by compliments and social triumphs, this Creole who was so anxious to become his friend, and the young Corsican, who was quite willing to let her be so, soon became very good friends.

And then Mme. de Beauharnais was thinking of marrying again. She did not know whom she should marry, but she was looking about for a suitable person. . . . It was natural that she, the widow of a general, should notice this young officer who had lately been much remarked as the subduer of the sections' recent attempt at insurrection and who had already been noticed by the whole of fashionable Paris of those days and who himself was on the highroad to become a fashionable personage; and it was also natural that she should be noticed by him. And then she had just received—at least so she says,[1] but this assertion has never been proved—offers of

[1] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 141. The comte de Montgaillard, in his *Souvenirs* (p. 222), asserts that it was Hoche who did not want to have anything more to do with Josephine "because she was always pestering him for money." Barras also asserts that she was Hoche's mistress and that this young general refused to marry her, but for other reasons. . . . "He had been obliged," says he, "to acknowledge that Mme. de Beauharnais had no real respect for the feelings which she professed to possess; and that passion, which did not prevent her from being a very calculating person indeed, was powerless to make her faithful: he often proved this to be the case, and especially on one occasion, when he learnt from one of his aides-de-camp who had had to carry a message from him to Mme. de Beauharnais, that Josephine had tried to play the part of Potiphar's wife. And this was not the only occasion on which the general had cause to

marriage from General Hoche and old M. de Caulaincourt. General Bonaparte was almost the only general in Paris at that time; all his brother-officers were on active service. If she married General Bonaparte, she would have the right to appear at all the official receptions and fêtes given by the new court which had now taken the place of the court of the Tuileries at which she had never appeared.[1] Had she no other reason? Did she not wish to revenge her wounded pride upon the society which had refused to open its doors to her and which had been swept away by the Revolution? This consideration,

reproach Mme. de Beauharnais; I must say it, and I can prove it by the following letter written in General Hoche's own handwriting: 'As for Rose' (Rose was one of Mlle. Tascher-Lapagerie's baptismal names and the name by which she went among her own circle of friends), 'as for Rose,' wrote Hoche, 'let her leave me in peace; I give her to Vanakre, my groom.' This man, who had a splendid physique, had been much noticed by Mme. de Beauharnais, who had even given him many presents in secret, such as her portrait, enclosed in a gold locket, and a chain of the same precious metal. . . . The story of the rupture with Hoche and the *tutti quanti* was known all over Paris" (Barras, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 53–4).

We can believe what we like of the above assertions; but Mme. Bonaparte's behaviour with Murat, when the latter brought the treaty of Cherasco to Paris, and then with Junot when she went, much against her will, to join her glorious husband in Italy, and again with Lieutenant Hippolyte Charles, during her sojourn in Italy, gives us sufficient cause to believe Barras' assertions, especially when we remember that she was still a widow at the time of which he speaks. As for Barras himself, nothing can excuse his revelations concerning the conduct of the woman whom he once loved.

[1] "Although the Beauharnais were of gentle birth, they had no right to drive in the royal equipages, and Josephine—Mme. de Beauharnais—was *never* presented at court. Her husband was only invited to the court-balls because he was a good dancer. . . ." Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 382). Mme. d'Abrantès frequently mentions in her *Mémoires* and also in her *Salons de Paris* (Vol. III, p. 311) the fact that Mme. de Beauharnais was not admitted to the court of Louis XVI. This assertion is confirmed by Constant in his *Mémoires* (Vol. I, p. 321).

so futile in itself, was it not of the greatest importance to this most futile of women? Besides, if we go deeper into the question, Mme. de Beauharnais perhaps had other and more serious reasons. But was that really the case? Loving pleasure and enjoyment as she loved them, it would have been more seemly, especially in the very mixed society in which she moved, if she had had a husband to protect her; and then her children, who were still young, it is true, would soon reach that age when they would require a father's protection and a masculine mind to direct and counsel them. Could she, a daughter of the old régime, guide her young son through the labyrinth of the new society which was now enthroned on the ruins of the past? It was, we must confess, a difficult task. So, on this occasion, Mme. de Beauharnais' wishes, or rather plans and interests, were ruled by common sense. There was only one obstacle: the general was younger than she. But what did she care? First of all, she had no intention of divulging her age; she did not look her age; and if she were driven into a corner and forced to confess it, she would only do so after signing the marriage-settlement—or even on the wedding-day. And then she would no longer have any need to dread a confession which she would certainly prefer not to have to make, but which would not injure her plans in any way. And then, what was the good of telling her exact age? She need only omit to produce her certificate of baptism. How could she obtain this document from Martinique? Not only was that island very far away, but it was being blockaded by the English. Was Bonaparte too young for her? But does it not frequently happen that men of twenty-five or twenty-

six years of age, prefer women of thirty to girls of eighteen or twenty years of age? She was thirty and a little more. Well, then? . . . Why should she not try to get the young officer to marry her? Ah! but he had no money: that was a more serious obstacle, as she knew full well. Mme. Tallien had probably told her this fact, if she happened to ask her; otherwise she must have guessed it, for surely the young Corsican must have told her of his family, of his seven brothers and sisters; and although he may not have confessed his poverty, it must have been quite easy to guess that when there are eight children to share the fortune of a Corsican gentleman, even supposing that gentleman were one of the most wealthy in the island, each child would only come in for a small share. "But *bast!*" doubtless thought Mme. de Beauharnais; "the general is on the highroad to fame and fortune; he is Barras' *protégé*. I, too, am in Barras' good books; so what with him, Mme. Tallien and my other friends, I shall manage to get what I want. And if he is killed in battle? Oh! well, I shall get a pension, and then I can marry somebody else."

Such, no doubt, were Mme. de Beauharnais' reasons for making the first advances to General Bonaparte and getting him to make love to her.[1] There was also another reason, and that was that she was no longer in her first youth; she must make haste to find a husband who could give her a settled position before her already passing youth had left her altogether. "Although she had lost all traces of youthful freshness," says Marmont, "she knew how to please."[2]

[1] "My brother Napoleon takes much notice of her, or rather is much noticed by her" (*Mémoires de Lucien Bonaparte*, passage quoted in *Bonaparte et son temps*, by Th. Jung, Vol. III, p. 120).

[2] Duc de Raguse, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 183.

But we must now draw her portrait. She was of medium height ; her complexion was more sallow than white ; her face usually bore a strange look of astonishment ; her nose, which was small and rather turned-up, supplied the animated expression which the dark blue eyes lacked. The eyelashes were thick and slightly curled ; they were one of her greatest charms. Her hair had that tinge, natural or artificial, which women prefer because men like it, and which they call auburn ; the forehead was adorned with little curls which made her look particularly bewitching and completed the artless charm which distinguished every feature of her physiognomy. We must not mention her mouth : her teeth were awful. Perhaps Napoleon did not remark this fact at first : Corsican women nearly always have bad teeth whenever they are lucky enough to have any at all, for most of them lose their teeth before they are twenty-one years of age. So this little imperfection in Mme. de Beauharnais' personal appearance did not strike him so much as it would have struck a Parisian, for instance. Besides Mme. de Beauharnais, who was not anxious to show her teeth, took care to hide them behind her smiling, but tightly closed lips. She had beautiful arms, but the fingers were too square and the nails were too flat. Her figure, which was placed too low, is not worth mentioning. Her chief charm lay in her general appearance, in the graceful movements peculiar to Creole women, and in an air of indifference always possessed by ladies who are not endowed with much heart. In short, taking her all together, she made a very pleasing picture ; and, although Marmont says that she had lost all the freshness of youth, she was still very desirable.

When once her plans were made, she, with a great display of coquetry and not a little skill, persuaded the young fellow to do what she wanted him to do. It was not a very difficult matter, and General Bonaparte had no need to dread hearing her wishes. Bonaparte was an inexperienced lover, whereas the beautiful widow, for her part, had had plenty of experience. Like most men who marry coquettes and think they are acting of their own free will, whereas they are only the victims of persuasion and personal interest, Bonaparte was nothing but the man whom the lovely widow had chosen to serve her own purposes and to carry out her own plans. The Corsican's inflexible character became pliant in the hands, or arms, if you prefer the term, of the coquettish Creole. Things were going very smoothly. The laws of propriety were somewhat set at defiance; but what did the beautiful widow care as long as she got what she wanted?

Brought up in the principles, or rather in the lack of principles, for which the royal court had always been famous, and especially so during the last days of the monarchy, undismayed by the pernicious example set by the still more corrupt court of the *Directoire*, ignorant of duty, seldom tormented by scruples, devoted to pleasure and dissipation, every means which could further her interests and give her what she wanted seemed right to her. General Bonaparte was a frequent visitor at her house; she often went with her friend, Mme. Tallien, to the sumptuous *déjeuners* to which he invited them in his magnificent house in the rue des Capucines.[1] The 13th *vendémiaire* was not so very far away, and twenty-

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 82.

three days later we find Mme. de Beauharnais writing to young General Bonaparte :

" You no longer come to see a friend who loves you ; you have quite forsaken her ; you are very wrong, for she is passionately devoted to you.

" Come to-morrow, *septidi*, and breakfast with me ; I want to see you and to chat with you upon matters concerning your interest.

" Good night, my friend, I embrace you.

" *Veuve* BEAUHARNAIS.

" This 6th *brumaire*."[1]

Does not this letter show us once and for all that it was Mme. de Beauharnais who took the first steps in the matter ? Does it not seem to indicate the existence of a plan which the opposite party does not seem so anxious to adopt as the beautiful widow could wish ?

And then it contains a positive confession : " You no longer come to see a friend who loves you." When a young man of twenty-six years of age receives such a kind invitation from a pretty woman, how can he keep his head, especially when he is still such a novice at the game of love as General Bonaparte was in those days ? On the other hand, this confession is only the written confirmation of a certain verbal confession made not so very long ago—that is certain. When a woman of thirty-six years of age writes in these terms to a young man and tells him that she is passionately devoted to him, we may take it that she is ready to grant his wishes, if she has not already done so, and that she is extremely anxious that matters shall not stop there. Besides, the

[1] De Coston, *Premières années de Napoléon*, Vol. I, p. 433.

words : " chat with you upon matters concerning your interest " indicate that the general had already mentioned his plans for the future and that Mme. de Beauharnais, if she cannot persuade him to come and see her for her own sake, mentions her interest in his career and her interest in his person in order to make more sure of his coming : was she not on most intimate terms with Mmes. Tallien and Barras ? did not her friendship with these two persons make her a powerful protectress ? And then the widow concludes by saying : " I embrace you." And this friendship was of but recent date : it had been quick work ! So this letter proves that they were on most intimate terms with each other. Although this conquest was involuntary at first, General Bonaparte seldom won a battle in less time.

But was Bonaparte loved, as the beautiful widow was pleased to write and tell him ? We may be allowed to doubt that fact after reading Barras' memoirs in which he informs us that she told him that she did not feel drawn towards her fiancé, and also after reading that other letter which Mme. de Beauharnais wrote to one of her friends in which she declares once and for all that she does not love him. She accepted him as her lover because she knew that was the best, or rather the surest way, to make him marry her ; as to loving him, that is another matter. Read this :

" You have met General Bonaparte at my house. Well, he wishes to act the part of a father to Alexandre de Beauharnais' orphans, and of husband to his widow ! Do you love him ? you will ask me. Oh ! dear, no. Then you dislike him ? No, but I feel disagreeably indifferent to him, and that is worse than anything

as religious folk know when they begin to find their devotions irksome."

Although Mme. de Beauharnais had not quite made up her mind to marry General Bonaparte—for she did not love him and "she felt disagreeably indifferent to him," she left no stone unturned in her endeavours to get him to propose to her; after all, supposing she were to change her mind during the interval preceding the marriage, was she not free to do so, notwithstanding the fact that she had done everything in her power to bring him to the point?

Let us now read General Bonaparte's letter; the widow had certainly managed to make him fall violently in love with her.

"I awake and my thoughts are all of you. Your portrait and the intoxicating evening spent in your company yesterday have left my senses in a curious state of unrest. Sweet and incomparable Josephine, what a strange effect you produce upon my heart! Are you angry, do I see you sad, are you anxious?—then my heart straightway feels as if it would break, and your friend cannot rest. But am I in better plight when, abandoning myself to the passion which throbs in my breast, I endeavour to awaken in your heart and on your lips the flame of love? Ah! I saw full well last night that your portrait was not like the original. You are starting at midday, so I shall see you before three hours have elapsed. Meanwhile, *mio dolce amor*, I send a million kisses; but do not kiss me, for your kisses set my blood on fire."[1]

[1] Letter from Napoleon to Josephine: De Coston, *Premières années de Napoléon*, Vol I, p. 436; Th. Jung, *Bonaparte et son temps*, Vol. III,

Bonaparte, like all the young men of that time, had read Rousseau ; this letter might have been written by Saint-Preux. It gives a very good idea of the terms of intimacy existing between the pair of lovers, and it shows what progress General Bonaparte had made in the widow's good graces. The latter had obtained her first wish : Bonaparte had fallen head foremost into the trap and was madly in love with her ; she held him fast like a spider which had just pounced upon the fly which it has been watching for a long time and round which it proceeds to wind thousands and thousands of silken threads ; she had got him fast ; she knew how to make him marry her whenever she wanted him to do so. Meanwhile Mme. de Beauharnais seemed to take keen pleasure in prolonging the engagement, a time of indifference for her, not very distasteful to her, although she asserts the contrary, a time of amorous exaltation for Bonaparte. In short, she bore the situation without much discomfort to herself, and did not seem over anxious to hasten the end. Was she expecting another proposal of marriage from some richer lover ? Her reluctance to name the happy day causes us to think that we have guessed aright.

But the young general, now that his affections were seriously engaged, did not leave her much peace. He wanted her to be always with him. The beautiful widow neglected her children and her home and took her meals in the same restaurant where General Bonaparte took his. Bourrienne says :[1] " He called my attention one

p. 122. This letter shows that General Philippe de Ségur is mistaken when he says : " Notwithstanding the loose morals of the time, he never became the widow's husband until entitled to do so by the bonds of holy matrimony " (*Histoire et Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 178).

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 100–1.

day to a young lady who was seated nearly exactly opposite him, and asked me what I thought of her ; my reply seemed to give him much pleasure. He then told me a good deal about her, her family and her amiable disposition ; he told me that he should probably marry her, because he was quite sure that the young widow would make him happy."

He was evidently very much in earnest. He therefore made her a proposal of marriage during the month of January, 1796 ; and a favourable reply, after rather a lengthy delay however, put the finishing touch to the happiness of the young lover, who foresaw a long vista of bliss consequent on this union.

Bourrienne says that Bonaparte's marriage was one of ambition rather than one of inclination. " I could quite see from his conversation," says he, " that this marriage would be very useful, in that it would further his ambitions. His ever-increasing intimacy with the woman whom he loved, brought him into touch with the most influential people of the time, and helped him on in his career."[1] It is quite possible that Bonaparte said this. Young men are proud to let their friends see that they are loved, but they think it weak to say that they themselves are in love : among themselves they affect to treat real love as if it were only a passing fancy.

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 102. Lucien Bonaparte says much the same with great bitterness, and yet he must have known that this was not true. When the First Consul sent Cambacérès to him in order to persuade him to break off his marriage with Mme. Jouberthon, he replied, " What a ridiculous request ! How can he dare to suppose that he has power to make me desert my wife ?—the wife whom I chose of my own free will, who brought me neither dowry nor promotion when I married her ! " (Th. Jung, *Lucien et ses Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 314).

" Men," said Montaigne once upon a time, with much truth, " men always try to make themselves out worse than they really are."

Perhaps Bonaparte wanted to pose before Bourrienne, his old schoolfellow, or else he wished to hide the fact that he was in love—he was sometimes ashamed of his mother because she did not speak French correctly—some feeling of false shame may have made him anxious to hide his real feelings from his friend, and so he spoke of the strange marriage he was about to contract as if it would help him on in the world. But that is a mistake which many other authors besides Bourrienne have made : we shall see why.

Barras had tried to make Mme. de Beauharnais believe that if she married General Bonaparte, he would give him the command of the *armée d'Italie*. The following lines from her pen will prove this fact : these lines conclude the letter which we have just quoted in which she confesses that she does not love her fiancé and " feels disagreeably indifferent to him." Here they are :

" Barras assures me that if I marry the general, he will get the command of the *armée d'Italie* for him. Yesterday Bonaparte, while talking to me of this favour which, although it has not been accorded yet, has already made his brother-officers murmur, said : ' Do they think that I need interest in order to reach the goal of my desires ? Some day the whole lot of them will be only too glad to be patronized by me. My sword is by my side and with it I shall go far afield.' "[1]

This letter proves that Barras really said certain things

[1] Letter from Josephine : De Coston, *Premières années de Napoléon*, Vol. II, p. 347 ; Th. Jung, *Bonaparte et son temps*, Vol. III, p. 117.

to Mme. de Beauharnais, but it does not prove that he helped her to obtain the post she was anxious to get for her fiancé. He probably wanted her to think that she owed this nomination to him, thus show his friendship for her and free himself from all obligation to this young officer whose masterful taking of Toulon he himself, when commissioner to the *Convention*, had witnessed, and who had been of great use to him on the 13th *vendémiaire*. But he was only promising what he could not perform. Carnot loudly claims the honour of having placed General Bonaparte at the head of the *armée d'Italie*. It was only after the brilliant victories which marked Bonaparte's first campaign that Barras, in order to get praise for what he had not done, determined to tell his gang of courtiers that people owed the very happy choice of the commander of the army to him, to his sagacity and to his knowledge of human nature. What proofs did he furnish ? Read these lines : they were written by Carnot :

" It is not true that it was Barras who suggested that the command of the *armée d'Italie* should be given to Bonaparte ; it was I who proposed him ; some time was then allowed to elapse in order to see how the young officer would succeed ; and it was only among Barras' most intimate friends that he boasted of the fact that it was he who had proposed Bonaparte to the *Directoire*. If Bonaparte had failed, all the blame would have fallen upon me, and I should have been told that I had proposed a young, inexperienced fellow, or an intriguer, to occupy this post : I should have been accused of betraying my fatherland. The others did not trouble themselves about the war ; all the responsibility would have fallen upon my shoulders. Bonaparte was victorious ;

Barras immediately declared that it was he who had got the post for Bonaparte, so we owed everything to Barras ; he was his patron, he had defended him against my attacks ; it was said that I was jealous of Bonaparte, and that I tried to thwart his plans, that I persecuted him, disparaged him ; I refused to help him, so it was evident that I wished to ruin him. Such were the scandalous reports with which Barras' allies, the newspapers, were filled in those days."[1]

That is conclusive. We find yet another proof in the assertions of the honest La Revellière-Lépeaux, who said : " The careful study which Bonaparte seemed to have made of Italy and Italian matters in general, his clear-sightedness and the success which seemed likely to attend his campaign, made us determine to intrust the command of the *armée d'Italie* to him."[2]

It is therefore highly probable, as each one wanted to get the praise for himself, that Carnot proposed Bonaparte to the *Directoire*, and that the four other members, already predisposed in the young general's favour, gave him their support. Nevertheless a rumour was not only spread but believed in which it was said that Barras alone had been astute enough to guess Bonaparte's genius and had been able to persuade the *Directoire* to give him the post ; in short, we are always reading that Bonaparte owed the command of the *armée d'Italie* to Barras. Moreover, General Thiébault, at that time Captain Thiébault, who joined the army at the same time as the commander-in-chief and who in his memoirs tells us all the military

[1] *Mémoires historiques et militaires sur Carnot*, taken from his manuscripts, his writings and his hitherto unpublished correspondence, by P. F. Tissot, Paris, 1824, p. 252 (Carnot's reply to Bailleul's statement).

[2] La Revellière-Lépeaux, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 23.

gossip of the day, says that : " People declared that this appointment was made more in order to please Mme. Bonaparte than for the good of the fatherland."[1]

This is absolutely untrue.

However, the events of the 13th *vendémiaire* had brought General Bonaparte into public notice. His brother-officers foresaw, not without a few twinges of jealousy, that he would soon obtain an important post, which accounts for the sentence in Josephine's letter : " this favour, although it has not been accorded yet, has already made his brother-officers murmur." We must not forget that laurels gathered on the bloody battle-field of civil warfare have never been popular in the army ; and it was for this reason, rather than on account of Bonaparte's youth, that his brother-officers grumbled. Hoche, Moreau and Marceau were all younger than he when they were promoted to similar posts.

Mme. de Beauharnais' coquettish wiles worked like magic. Bonaparte, in love for the first time in his life, and madly in love (as is always the case on that occasion) not with, as it has been said, Mme. de Beauharnais' family connections and fortune—they were of no account —but with the woman, spent all the time he could spare from his military duties by the side of his lackadaisical companion.

So we see that this very commonplace adventure of

[1] Thiébault, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 5. Barras, in his *Mémoires*, published since writing the above lines, ascribes to himself all the honour and merit of having suggested to Carnot that Bonaparte should be appointed to command the *armée d'Italie*. There is no doubt about the fact that Carnot, notwithstanding the unkind things which La Revellière says of him in his *Mémoires*, can be believed, whereas we cannot trust Barras' assertions.

an inexperienced young man who knows nothing of the ways of the world and of artful women, who has allowed himself to be entrapped by the extremely simple and well-known tricks of a heartless flirt, differs in many respects from the romantic and touching—if you like to consider it so—story which was invented after the marriage, which story declared that when, in consequence of the events of the 13th *vendémiaire*, the Parisians were forbidden to keep fire-arms in their houses and were ordered to carry them to the town halls of their respective *arrondissements*, the young Eugène de Beauharnais went to beg General Bonaparte to give him back the sword of his father, formerly a general in the army of the Republic. The lad,[1] so runs the legend, had been very kindly received by General Bonaparte, and on the morrow of this visit, Mme. de Beauharnais went in person to thank the general. He was quite fascinated by her Creole charm and Parisian manners. The general then asked to be allowed to call upon her from time to time, and so their friendship began.

What must we think of this story? Nothing, except that it was invented from beginning to end by somebody whose interest or wish it was to cast a halo of romance and refinement over the very commonplace reality.

Thanks to the *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène* and to prince Eugène's *Mémoires*, this story has been perpetuated by different authors for different reasons.[2] We can leave

[1] Prince Eugène de Beauharnais, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 32; *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, Vol. I, p. 467; baron de Barante, *Histoire du Directoire de la République française*, Vol. I, p. 182. La Valette, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 174, etc. etc.

[2] "We find another proof given by one of Josephine's friends, J. C. Bailleul, who says: 'I never heard this anecdote mentioned at the

Barras' formal denial of the report out of the question ; the widow Beauharnais' letter and that of Bonaparte quoted elsewhere, destroy this legend ; as to domiciliary visits, Barras' friends had no need to fear any such annoyance.[1]

There is one story, however, which is not an invention, although it sounds very much like one, and that is the well-known prediction made to Josephine when a child announcing to her that she would ascend the throne of France. Josephine repeated this story so often, that at last people began to doubt it. And yet it was quite true : General Lamarque reproduces the story in his *Mémoires ;* and as this story gives certain details which we find in no other work, as it confirms once and for all what, otherwise, might be considered as an invention of Josephine's fertile brain, we will reproduce it here ; no biographer, hitherto, has taken the trouble to look for this prediction in the *Mémoires* of the hero of Fontarabia and Capri : " In my childhood," says General Lamarque, " I often met Josephine at the house of an American, Mme. de Hostein, with whom she had been brought up ; she was then the wife of Alexandre de Beauharnais who was much remarked at the *Assemblée constituante* for his wit, his charming manners and his patriotic principles. I saw her some years later when I was ordered to carry to Paris the banners won from Spain at the battle of

time, and the marriage was already an accomplished fact when people heard of it for the first time' " (J. C. Bailleul, *Etudes sur les causes de l'élévation de Napoléon*, Paris, 1834, Vol. I, p. 126 ; Arthur Levy, *Napoléon intime*, p. 98). The existence of relations before this so-called episode is again proved by Ouvrard in his *Mémoires*, Vol. I., p. 19 and 20.

[1] *Mémoires de Barras*, Vol. I, p. 264 and 358.

Saint-Martial and at the taking of Fontarabia; she, together with good Mme. de Hostein, had only just been released from prison, and we dined with the celebrated General Santerre, who had shared these ladies' captivity and had shown them all manner of little attentions. It was then that I heard mentioned for the first time (*thermidor*, 1794) the prediction which a gipsy had once made: 'that she would be queen of France some day but that she would not die a queen'—'Robespierre almost prevented that prediction coming true!' said she with a little laugh.

"Josephine married Bonaparte; he was commanding the *armée d'Italie* at that time; his name was in everybody's mouth, and Mme. de Hostein, when on her deathbed, said to me in a feeble voice: 'Well! my friend, the gipsy was out in her geography; Josephine will not be queen of France but queen of Italy.'"

"I repeat these details," General Lamarque adds, "because they relate to the strangest stroke of good-luck which perhaps ever befell any woman."[1]

When we consider this marriage, we cannot help thinking that General Bonaparte was not a very likely person to captivate the fashionable, frivolous Mme. de Beauharnais. It was more easy to understand how he allowed himself to be caught in her wiles. He, owing to his reserved nature and his more brusque than polished manners, was far from being what the fashionable world terms: a pleasant fellow; he was nothing but a good-hearted creature—and a genius: the sort of man one seldom sees in fashionable drawing-rooms, and who is not much appreciated as long as he wears no laurels:

[1] Général Lamarque, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 405.

oh! when such a man becomes celebrated, how he is run after and *fêted!* but if such a man never obtains recognition, if he does not learn how to hide his superiority as carefully as other men learn to hide their faults or show their stupidity under that varnish of fashionable manners which makes genius and idiot seem exactly alike to people of no discrimination, he does not count, he is a nobody. The world, whenever it can see at all, only looks on the surface; the world cares less for quality than for quantity, less for merit than for success: those who are the sharpest and the least burdened with scruples are the cleverest; that is how so many fools manage to scale the ladder of social fame in such a short time. When a woman is in the case, men again only look on the surface. If a face is pretty, if it pleases them, don't they immediately think that the owner of the pretty face possesses every virtue and every good quality? A man thinks because he loves a woman that that woman is bound to love him in return. And so it was very natural that Bonaparte should fall in love with Mme. de Beauharnais; but what is less natural is that she should have consented to marry a man who had nothing to offer her but his youth, his intellect and his heart. It is true that he also brought her his rank as general, a key which opened the doors of all official *salons* to her, and brought her endless invitations and something even better, for it brought her her daily bread—which last fact made her decide to accept him.

However, General Bonaparte had not much time to devote to his fiancée while waiting for the happy day; nevertheless he spent all his spare hours with her. And yet his happiness was not altogether unclouded. His

mother, whose wishes he had not consulted—no doubt because he foresaw that the wise Mme. Letizia would give him advice which he was determined not to take, and because he was afraid she would refuse to give her consent, and he did not want to run the risk—his mother only heard of his plans to marry Mme. de Beauharnais through her other sons, Lucien and Joseph. She guessed that, as her son had not asked her permission to marry Mme. de Beauharnais, the plan, or rather the fiancée, was not likely to meet with her approval.[1] Was it a bad marriage, then ? Would he break it off ? That, at least, is what Mme. Letizia Bonaparte asked her son to do, when she begged him to think before pledging his word for ever, and to go no farther in the matter. Lucien and Joseph also urged him to break with Josephine. . . . But in vain. The charming Creole had bewitched the young Bonaparte, who probably thought that because women are sometimes flighty, they are not necessarily unprincipled ; she had brought him to that state of passion when a man will hear nothing, see nothing, unless it is favourable to his love or unless it confirms his passion for the divine creature whom he adores.[2] Not only were

[1] " The principal reason, and in fact the only reason for her dislike of the idea, was that Josephine was too old for her son, and that she would bear him no children " (Th. Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 365).

[2] We read in Lucien Bonaparte's *Mémoires*, that Napoleon was opposed to his brother's marriage with the widow Jouberthon and that he tried to prevent it. " The Consul will soon realize that he is in the wrong," said Mme. Letizia, " and make friends with his brother. He is perfectly well aware that he has no earthly right to expect you to marry someone of whom he approves, because he himself never asked you, nor even me, whether we approved of the woman whom he was about to marry," adds the mama (Th. Jung, *Lucien et ses Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 363).

MADAME MÈRE
From the collection of A. M. Broadley, Esq.

General Bonaparte's relatives opposed to the young Napoleon's projected union, but Mme. de Beauharnais' solicitor was equally opposed, if we believe another anecdote related by Bourrienne, and which, like that of the young Eugène de Beauharnais going to claim his father's sword from General Bonaparte, went the round of the town. This is what Bourrienne says about the matter:

"When Bonaparte was courting Mme. de Beauharnais, neither party owned a carriage and Bonaparte, who was very much in love, often gave her his arm when she went to consult her solicitor. One day they walked together to see the notary Raguideau. . . . Mme. de Beauharnais, who trusted Raguideau thoroughly, was going to him that very day in order to tell him that she intended to marry the young artillery officer, Barras' *protégé*. Josephine went in alone to see her solicitor. Bonaparte waited for her in the clerks' office. As the door of Raguideau's room was not properly closed, Bonaparte was able to overhear that worthy man doing his very best to persuade Mme. de Beauharnais not to make the projected marriage. 'You are very foolish,' said he to her, 'you will regret it; it is madness; you are going to marry a man who has nothing but a cloak and a sword.'—'Bonaparte,' said Josephine to me when recounting this episode of past times, 'never mentioned this fact to me; and I never knew that he had overheard Raguideau's speech to me. Can you imagine my astonishment, Bourrienne, when, on the day of the coronation, Napoleon, clad in his imperial robes, said to me: "Let somebody fetch Raguideau; let him come at once: I want to speak to him." Raguideau was promptly brought before him and then Bonaparte said to

him : " Well, have I got nothing but a cloak and a sword now ? " ' "[1]

Méneval, who became Bonaparte's private secretary after Bourrienne was dismissed from that post, tells the story far more simply and far more naturally. We should do well to consider his version as the only true one : "A few days before her marriage with General Bonaparte," says he, " Mme. de Beauharnais sent for her solicitor in order to discuss certain business matters with him. When M. Raguideau called, he was immediately ushered into the presence of Mme. de Beauharnais, who was still in bed. The other persons, with the exception of a young man whom the solicitor did not notice and who went and stood in the window-recess, left the room when he entered. After having discussed various matters concerning her approaching marriage, Mme. de Beauharnais wanted to know what people said about the whole affair. M. Raguideau did not hide the fact from her that her friends were grieved to hear of her marriage with a penniless soldier, younger than herself, whom she would have to support, and who might be killed in battle and, what was more, might leave her burdened with young children. Mme. de Beauharnais asked him if he thought the same. He did not hesitate to reply in the affirmative, adding that with her fortune[2] (her income amounted to 25,000

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. VI, p. 237.

[2] The baron de Méneval was mistaken in saying that Mme. de Beauharnais brought her husband an income of 25,000 francs. It is only one more invention. After General Bonaparte's conquests in Italy, people seemed to take a pleasure in exaggerating the importance of Mme. de Beauharnais' fortune, as if the report that Bonaparte had married a rich woman, could belittle him. The fact is that Mme. de Beauharnais, instead of possessing a fixed income, hardly owned anything more than debts : she was in a hurry to find a husband who, by

francs: £1000), she might make a better match. He ended by telling her, in his interest for her welfare, that this officer was doubtless a very estimable young man, but that he had nothing but his cloak and his sword.

"Mme. de Beauharnais thanked him for his advice; she then laughingly called the young man, who had meanwhile been standing by the window drumming with his fingers on the panes of glass, and who had seemed to display no interest in the conversation which had just taken place. It is unnecessary to say that this young man was General Bonaparte. 'General,' said Mme. de Beauharnais to him, 'have you heard what M. Raguideau has just said?'—'Yes,' replied he, 'he has spoken like an honourable man. I hope that he will continue to look after our interests, for he has made me feel as if I could trust him.' On M. Raguideau learning the young man's identity, he was somewhat disconcerted. However he had no cause to regret his frankness. Napoleon kept the promises made by General Bonaparte. He appointed him notary to the civil list."

"Here," continues Méneval, "is the story in all its simplicity; the rest only reflects honour on those who invented it. They say that the emperor, on his coronation-day, when arrayed in his imperial insignia, summoned M. Raguideau as he wanted to enjoy the pleasure of

marrying her, would save her from a very precarious and embarrassing position.

The young Bonaparte, who was quite engrossed in his love-affair, did not notice the impoverished state of his mistress's household, with its few remaining relics of past luxury. Accustomed as he was to his own simple family life and to Corsican homes, he probably did not even notice that Mme. de Beauharnais' establishment was in a very bad way, and was terribly like the establishments of certain women who put all they have on their backs! But love beautifies everything.

showing him all his imperial pomp and splendour; he then said to him: 'Raguideau, here is the cloak and here is the sword!' (He was wearing a sword, the scabbard of which was set with the *Regent* diamond.) I regret to be obliged to confess that it never occurred to the emperor's mind to revenge himself in this harmless manner; this story was certainly invented by a very witty man. . . .'"[1]

Our ancestors were very fond of anecdotes; they invented a great number, and they always seemed to have one on hand for every emergency, thus flattering their audience, the people's fondness for extraordinary events and the vanity of the imperial family. Did not people take a delight in saying that Napoleon first saw the light of day on a carpet on which was depicted either Cæsar or Alexander, and that this was a sign that the child would one day become the greatest warrior of modern times? Mme. Letizia Bonaparte herself destroyed this legend by declaring that it was not the custom in Corsica to have carpets in the bedrooms.[2] Did not people also say that his birth had been announced to the world by a comet, which was discovered, August 8th, 1769.[3] It has also been said that one day while Mme. Letizia was resting under a tree, she fell asleep, when the persons who were with her suddenly beheld several beautiful halos hover in the air and then disappear, which made people say that a divine manifestation had been made in favour of Mme. Letizia Bonaparte.[4] More than one similar legend was woven about Josephine, but what legend would not pale before her extraordinary destiny?

[1] Méneval, *Mémoires sur Napoléon et Marie-Louise*, Vol. I, p. 204.
[2] Baron Larrey, *Madame Mère*, Vol. I, p. 54.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 51.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 85, 86.

CHAPTER II

Marriage of the widow Beauharnais with General Bonaparte—The *hôtel* in the rue Chantereine—Bonaparte's love only meets with indifference from Josephine—The general starts for the wars—Correspondence between the young couple—Bonaparte begs his wife to join him in Italy—Josephine prefers to stay and amuse herself in Paris—She pretends to be *enceinte* in order to be allowed to remain—Bonaparte's affectionate solicitude for his wife when he learns that she is ill—He accuses himself of selfishness for having asked her to come to him—Josephine is obliged to confess that she told a lie—Her coldness for her husband—*Fête* given at the Luxemburg on receiving the flags won from the enemy by the *armée d'Italie*—The *citoyenne* Bonaparte reigns supreme—Josephine decides to start—A piteous scene—Incidents during the journey.

THE marriage was fixed for March 9th, 1796. It took place at ten o'clock in the evening at the *mairie* of the 2nd *arrondissement*. During the ceremony a comical little incident occurred which highly amused the company. The mayor, doubtless accustomed to go to bed very early, had fallen asleep; it was General Bonaparte who woke him up.

The public registers were not kept very carefully in those days. Mme. de Beauharnais profited by this fact in order to make herself younger by four years.[1] This

[1] If we believe General Tercier, who knew the Tascher de la Pagerie family and Josephine very intimately in Martinique, this concession was rather exaggerated. In short, he says: "It was about this time (1778) that the vessel *Le Fier*, sailed for France, bearing her who was one day to be empress of the French. She was eighteen years of age, although the *Almanach impérial* always gave her age ten years less than the reality. I accompanied her, etc., etc." (*Mémoires politiques*

act must have pleased the general who, unwilling to be behindhand in politeness, was kind enough to add one year on to his age. Notwithstanding these mutual concessions (we always have to make one or two when we marry) there was still a slight difference in their ages; but what do a few years more or less matter when love is there to make the happy pair forget difference of age and similar futilities? The young wife's witnesses were Barras, her erstwhile lover, and Tallien, the husband of her most intimate friend; General Bonaparte had chosen young Captain Lemarrois, his aide-de-camp, who later was to cover himself with glory by his splendid defence of Magdeburg, and a lawyer, M. Calmelet—a strange name, as the guests could not help remarking, for a witness to a love-match!

Neither of the two families was represented.

No religious sanction was given to the marriage; Josephine was not religious, she was only superstitious.

Mme. de Beauharnais had left the *hôtel* in the rue de l'Université where she lived with her aunt, Fanny de Beauharnais,[1] in the previous January, and had taken

et militaires du général Tercier, p. 21). According to General Tercier, whose evidence we can safely trust, she was (must we confess it?) thirty-six years of age at the time of her marriage.

[1] Mme. Fanny de Beauharnais, born in 1738, prided herself upon her literary talents and held a *salon* for men of letters. Dorat, Bitaubé, Rétif de la Bretonne, etc., etc., were frequently seen in her house; she had received many other famous men in bygone days. "She was not only a charming and a tactful hostess, but she was something more. She was a good listener, and seemed to listen when her thoughts were really absent. She said two or three pretty things during her lifetime and was careful not to repeat them too often" (De Goncourt, *La Société française pendant la Révolution*, p. 9). And the mistress of the house was not only a good-hearted creature, but she kept a good table, and it may be that the latter attraction was more potent than the former. But she had one little failing. Not content with reading

up her abode with that lady at No. 6, rue Chantereine, in the little *hôtel* which she had just bought from Talma's wife, Julie Carreau, to whom it belonged; a small deposit had been paid. She had sent her children, whose presence was not required at that moment, to Saint-Germain; Hortense wept bitterly, says Mme. Campan, at the school whither her mother had sent her, on hearing that her mother was going to change her name.[1]

General Bonaparte had reached the highest pinnacle of earthly bliss: the beautiful widow whom he loved and loved to distraction, who was all in all to him, now belonged to him for ever. She was his wife. . . . He gave himself up to his happiness; with the naïve inexperience of youth, he told her how he loved her, thinking thereby to make her love him—as if a woman could love because she is loved! He had a vague feeling, although he did not really realize it, that his wife did not return his affection; he thought, poor fellow, that he did not love her sufficiently, or that at least he did not know how to express his feelings, and so he only loved her all the more.

We must confess that Josephine was far from loving him as he loved her. A coquette has naturally very little

and listening to her friends' productions, she herself had begun to scribble. She wrote a few novels: *la Fausse inconstance, les Amants d'autrefois*, etc., together with some comedies and poems. Later she even made poetry upon her niece's husband, upon Napoleon! If we believe the poet Lebrun, this was not her only failing; she had another which her niece soon copied. This, in fact, is what Lebrun said of her:

> "Eglé, the fair poetess, has two faults,
> She makes up her face and makes bad verse."

Mme. de Beauharnais' works are forgotten, while her little follies, thanks to Lebrun, will never be forgotten.

[1] *Correspondance de Mme. Campan avec la reine Hortense*, introduction, p. 14.

feeling. She only pretends to love; she loves her lover less for himself than for what he can give her: compliments, presents, flattery, dinners, *fêtes* and receptions of all sorts. As Mme. Bonaparte did not love her young husband, she could not understand him; and as we very soon learn to dislike what we cannot understand, she received his demonstrations of affection with coldness and repulsed her husband's love. Was it because it was the fashion in a certain class of society at that time—the ultra-fashionable society dating from the reigns of Louis XV and Louis XVI—not to love one's husband? We may be allowed to think so, because she had liked him well enough before the marriage! she had tried to make him love her. But now that she had got what she wanted, now that she was married, married to a man who had given her a splendid position in the fashionable world, she wanted to enjoy all the advantages which her marriage had brought to her; as to the disadvantages . . . to tell the truth, there was only one, and that was her husband!

However, she was not much to be pitied as regards the disadvantage, for General Bonaparte started for Italy two days after the wedding and left her in Paris, free to follow the life of gaiety and dissipation which she loved above everything else in the world. Barras tells us that Bonaparte was simple enough to confide Josephine to his care.

Marriage made no difference in Josephine's indifference; and as indifference in love means coldness, General Bonaparte, although he was deeply in love with his wife, was at last obliged to recognize that fact. But he was still only at the suspicious stage; he dreaded to learn

that he was not loved as he loved. Perhaps he thought, until the wedding-day, that Josephine's indifference was caused by certain scruples—which Josephine was quite incapable of experiencing—and that marriage would put an end to this awkward state of affairs ; but nothing of the sort happened.

" The two days following the wedding-day sufficed to implant in Napoleon's breast the doubts and suspicions which were never to leave him for one single instant during the marvellous campaign in Italy."[1]

Far from the object of our affections, absence, by the mere fact that we are separated from those we love, makes our hearts more tender, at least it does so in most cases. Bonaparte was not an exception to this rule. Hardly has he a moment to himself, when he writes to his beloved wife while fresh horses are being harnessed to his carriage at Chanceaux :

" I wrote you from Châtillon, and I sent you a power of attorney so that you could obtain the payment of certain sums due to me. . . .

" Each moment takes me farther away from you, adorable friend ! and each moment makes me feel less able to bear to be separated from you. I think of you day and night ; my imagination tries to guess what you are doing. My heart bleeds, and my burden of care is heavier to bear when I see you sad. If you are happy and enjoy life in company with your friends, I reproach you for forgetting the fact that we have been parted for three days ; you are thoughtless, then, and therefore you are incapable of feeling things very deeply.

" So you see that I am difficult to please. But, my

[1] Arthur Lévy, *Napoléon intime*, p. 112.

kind friend, it would be quite a different matter supposing I were to learn that you were ill or that you had some cause to be down-hearted unknown to me ; ah ! then I should regret the rapidity with which I had been torn from the heart I love. I realize that you no longer care for me, and I shall not rest until I hear that no misfortune has befallen you. When they ask me if I have slept well, I feel that I cannot reply until I have received a message telling me that you passed a good night. The ailments, the follies of mankind can only affect me when I remember that they may attack you, my kind friend. May the good genius which has hitherto preserved me from great danger, surround you, hover over you, and then I shall not mind what happens to me. Ah ! do not be cheerful, but somewhat sad ; and, above all, do not let grief assail your soul, or sickness assail your body : you know what our good Ossian says upon that subject.

" Write to me, my affectionate friend, write a long letter ; let me press on your forehead the thousand and one kisses which flow from the tenderest and truest of hearts."

Bonaparte was so engrossed by his love for Josephine that it seems he forgot that he was married, and, doubtless by force of habit, addressed this letter as follows :

" To the *citoyenne* Beauharnais, rue Chantereine, No. 6, Paris."

Bonaparte's love for Josephine amounted to genuine passion : " Ah ! do not be cheerful, but somewhat sad. . . ." Does not this little piece of advice almost sound like reproach ? Does it not look as if Bonaparte had noticed that, instead of appearing grieved when her husband set off for the wars, as she ought to have been,

her spirits had only seemed to rise ? And they had only been married two days ! No, the Josephine of those days did not love her husband ; she was glad to see him go, not because she thought that some misfortune might befall him during the war—oh ! no, she was so kind-hearted !—but simply because she thought that, when he was no longer there, she would be free to amuse herself as she liked ; free to attend the receptions given at the Luxemburg by her friend, the *citoyenne* Tallien, without a sulky, jealous husband to grumble at her all the time ; free to go to the suppers given by the lively *directeur* Barras, either at the Luxemburg or at Croissy, without having to ask the general's permission and without feeling that he was watching her every movement ; free to go on long summer days to picnics at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, or to the local *fêtes* of Saint-Cloud, Passy, Sèvres and Mousseaux ; free to go and rub elbows with the crowd at Tivoli ; free to go and see the indecent performances given at Idalie, to try and cut out the *citoyenne* Tallien and Mlle. Lange, to be stared at, admired and flattered ! Was not this better than being loved, better than the love of a mere youth, who quoted Ossian in his letters ? for, although Bonaparte was a general, he was nothing but a novice in the art of love-making.

Poor fellow ! he was very much in love ! He reached Nice, and then hurried on to Porto-Maurizio at the head of an army which, it must be confessed, was not much to look at, was nearly destitute of everything needful, and which seemed to have been sent there just to be out of the way, as they had sent him there, him, the young general, and had given him the least desirable post they

could find in the hope that it would keep him quiet. Well! instead of giving himself airs on the strength of having obtained this post, of which, after all, he had reason to be proud; instead of getting the best out of his youth and position and wasting his time generally, he worked as hard as if he were a subaltern trying to earn distinction for himself and to draw his superior officers' attention to his merits; he slaved day and night.

Notwithstanding his numerous occupations, he still found time to think of his wife whom he loved so dearly. He sent her letters in which he breathed forth all his love, his pure, ardent, tender yet passionate love, the love of a young man. He writes to her:

"My only Josephine, I am miserable when I am away from you. Far from you, the world seems like a desert in which I stand isolated, alone. I cannot even enjoy the consolation of being able to tell you all I feel. You have taken something more than my soul from me. You are the only thought of my life. When I am worried by business, by overwork, when I am in doubt as to the ultimate success of any undertaking, when I am disgusted with my fellow-men, when I am ready to curse life, I place my hand on my heart; your portrait is there, I look at it and my love for you gives me exquisite bliss; everything seems good to me except the hours when I am absent from my friend."[1]

It is a wearisome task to have to reply to love-letters when one is not in love with the writer. However, the *citoyenne* Bonaparte was kind enough to answer them; she was so kind-hearted! And then she had been married for such a short time! she really felt she must

[1] Imbert de Saint-Amand, *La citoyenne Bonaparte*, p. 7.

do something to please her husband. What would life be if we did not make mutual concessions from time to time ? She was not selfish, so she sacrificed herself on the altar of affection and wrote. Her letters delighted the man to whom they were addressed. He did not need to be pressed to send a reply. Let my readers remember the day when, perhaps hardly out of college, they received their first love-letter ; at that age we love so passionately that we ask ourselves how a woman, that divine creature of whom we despair of ever being worthy, how a woman can deign to look at us, much less write to us ! Oh ! a woman's letter ! a letter from the woman you love ! . . . Although Bonaparte was in reality twenty-seven years of age, his behaviour was that of a youth of twenty. A few lines in his wife's handwriting threw him into an ecstasy of bliss which astonished the woman who had caused it. For, as La Rochefoucauld says, absence quenches half-hearted affection and increases real passion, as a violent wind extinguishes a rush-light and kindles a great fire. Never was a truer saying and more applicable to the young couple's mutual feelings towards one another.

" How," writes Bonaparte, " how did you manage to ensnare my heart and make me think of nothing but you ? To live for Josephine ! that is the story of my life. I am doing my very best to rejoin you ; I am dying to be with you again. Oh ! madman, I do not see that I am only going farther and farther away from you. What lands, what countries divide us ! What a long time it will be before you can read these words, feeble expressions of a heart of which you are queen ! "[1]

[1] Imbert de Saint-Amand, *La citoyenne Bonaparte*.

One kind word from Josephine sufficed to intoxicate her husband with delight. But Bonaparte's letters were powerless to warm his wife's cold heart.

Every lover believes his mistress when she tells him that she loves him. But when once he doubts her love, she may say or write what she likes—the doubts return stronger than ever; he thinks that she only writes affectionately and says affectionate things because she wishes to be kind. Poor Bonaparte had arrived at this point: on finding that his wife's few short, cold letters woke no echo in his passionate heart, he was almost tempted to think that he had been mistaken in her, and that his beautiful, indolent wife did not really care much for him. Does not indifference in love almost amount to deceit? He doubted her love, he doubted her honour, he doubted everything, and he quite lost his peace of mind, notwithstanding the fact that he still continued to send her very affectionate letters.

And yet he ought to have been happy in his profession: the young general had soon reorganized his little army; he, who was so weak when a certain woman was concerned, knew how to inspire his troops with those feelings which make for heroism. Was it not love which inspired him, which endowed him with world-famed genius for organization, for commanding troops and for winning victories? Montenotte, Millesimo, Mondovi were the fruits of his love for his wife, a true, ardent, infinite love. Is not love that state of extreme lucidness which enables us to read in the Book of God? Saint Augustine knew that fact when he wrote: "Give me a man who loves, and he will be able to understand everything."

These brilliant victories, the pledge of still greater

victories, did not help Bonaparte to forget his love. He was more wrapt up in his passion for his wife than ever before. But now he was sure of success, although he foresaw that his spirited march would not prevent Austria making the greatest sacrifices in order to keep Italy in her clutches, and therefore he knew that he would have to remain many long dreary months in Italy. He could not resign himself to pass all that time without seeing Josephine. He could think of nothing but her. And so he wrote to her telling her to come to him. Marmont says: "Although General Bonaparte was fully occupied by his military duties, the interests which had been intrusted to him and his plans for the future, he still had time to think of something else; his thoughts were continually with his wife. He longed for her, he waited for her with impatience. . . . He often spoke to me of her and of his love, with all the frankness and the illusions of a very young man. He was deeply wounded by her continual excuses and the endless delays, and he often gave way to fits of jealousy and superstition which were part and parcel of his Corsican nature.

"One day the glass of Josephine's portrait, which he always carried about with him in his pocket, happened to get broken; he turned deadly pale: 'Marmont!' said he, 'my wife is either ill or faithless.'"[1]

This speech does not seem to have been caused by anxiety alone; it was also caused by a longing to unburden himself (a natural feeling in young people), to tell all to his friend—Marmont had been Bonaparte's schoolfellow at the military college—without concealing any-

[1] Marmont, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 188. Ségur, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 242.

thing, without any mental reservation, to speak all that was in his mind. But what love was Bonaparte's great heart capable of feeling! What woman would not have been glad and thankful to have awakened such a passion? What woman would not have been proud to be loved by a man whose genius had attracted the attention of the whole of Europe, and whose exploits already surpassed, although he was still quite young, those of the most renowned warriors mentioned in history? And then she was just at that age when the joy of fame, combined with the still greater joy of loving and being loved, can be most fully enjoyed and appreciated by a woman; a woman is too young at twenty years of age. Oh! how happy many other women would have been, happy and thankful to be in the *citoyenne* Bonaparte's place!

But was she happy? Not a bit of it. What did she really want? She wanted her husband to allow her to stay quietly in Paris and enjoy herself and the reflected glory with which he was covering himself in far-away Italy! Was it such a very difficult thing to leave her in peace? And why did the general worry her with his stupid ideas that she ought to join him in Italy? Must a wife follow her husband? Is it the fashion for her to do so? Since when has it been the custom for women to go to the wars? Oh, no, it would be shocking bad taste to do so! If he forced her to go, he would be a perfect tyrant; he would be behaving like a veritable Corsican. And then Paris was such a pleasant place. Everybody was so kind to her! If her husband really loved her so much, ought he not to be thankful to see her made much of and noticed by those who, in paying their respects to her, were in reality paying homage to his

talents? Yes, in Paris she could hear the crowd, as it parted respectfully in order to let her pass, salute her as if she were a goddess, and her ears were flattered by the glorious name of "Our Lady of Victory."[1]

Would she hear similar acclamations elsewhere? And then those acclamations are only worth hearing in Paris. . . . Oh! there, there was happiness; she cared for nothing else. Why did he want to worry her? If her husband really loved her, let him leave her to enjoy herself in Paris!

The truth of the matter is that General Bonaparte really was tormenting and worrying her. And why? Selfish, like all men, he loved his wife and wanted to have her with him. What tyranny! He wrote her letter after letter begging her to start and come and join him in Italy. He loved her so dearly! His brilliant victories, his fame, the enthusiastic admiration of his troops, were nothing to him as long as his wife was not by his side to share his happiness. This hero, this man of genius knelt at her feet and wept, yes, wept like a child, because she would not have pity upon him. . . .

But it was only waste of time to talk of love and affection to the thoughtless Creole, who only cared for fun and dissipation. Her husband had not discovered that he was speaking a language which she did not understand, at least, not when *he* spoke it; and so the beautiful, cold, insensible, indolent creature replied as seldom as possible to the letters of the young and glorious general of the *armée d'Italie*.

It has often been said that Bonaparte did a very clever stroke of business in marrying Mme. de Beauharnais. Which of the two got the best of the bargain?

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 52.

And yet the letters which he sent her from Italy were full of affectionate expressions; he scarcely mentioned his victories except to lay them, as a token of his affection, at the feet of the woman he adored. How she had made him love her!—or rather, how he did love her! And he loved her naturally, frankly, exclusively, as every woman should be loved. Love strengthens and increases all our faculties, except the faculty of seeing the woman we love in her true colours; that is the only thing which we cannot see; we must repeat that the impetuosity with which Bonaparte conducted his campaigns in Italy with such success to himself, was partly due to love, his love for Josephine. Did not Fontenelle attribute Corneille's talents to love? Although we do not wish to assert that General Bonaparte's genius was the outcome of his passion for Josephine, we may be allowed to ask the question: supposing Josephine had returned her husband's affection, as any woman who had had any feeling or any common sense would have done in her place, would the hero of Italy have accomplished still greater things? Perhaps we ought to attribute his success to the fact that he was unhappy in his married life: many more noble deeds have been accomplished by miserable, disillusioned mortals than we think. Cannot we apply what the poet says of beautiful verse:

> "Les plus désespérés sont les chants les plus beaux,
> Et j'en sais d'immortels qui sont de purs sanglots."[1]

to many of the masterpieces of man's hand and brain?

General Bonaparte's love for Josephine was so great that, after having unburdened his mind to his aide-de-

[1] "The mourning heart e'en sings the sweetest song,
And many a strain immortal is fraught with sobs."

camp Marmont, he could not refrain, when writing to the *directeur* Carnot, from saying :

" I owe you my very grateful thanks for your kindness to my wife. She is a true patriot and I love her to distraction."[1]

And the same day he writes to his brother Joseph a letter filled with the same expressions of affection and tender solicitude for her welfare :

" I was in despair on learning that my wife had been ill. I have quite lost my head, and my mind is distracted with melancholy presentiments. I entreat you to take the greatest care of her. . . . Next to my Josephine, you are the only person in whom I still feel any interest. Reassure me, tell me the truth. You know my love for her, you know how passionately I love her. You know that I have never loved, that Josephine is the first woman whom I have ever adored ; I am in despair at her illness. . . . I long for her to come as soon as she is better and when she can take the journey ; I need to see her, to press her to my heart ; I love her to distraction and I cannot live without her. If she did not love me, I should no longer wish to live. Oh ! my kind friend, see to it that my messenger only remains six hours in Paris, and that he returns soon to call me back to life. . . . Goodbye, my kind friend."[2]

General Bonaparte always believed in presentiments ; he mentions " the painful presentiments with which his mind is distracted " to his brother Joseph. He spoke to

[1] *Correspondance de Napoleon Ier*, Vol. I, p. 251 ; Piacenza, May 9th, 1796.

[2] To Joseph, at Tortone, the 27th *prairial*, 1796. Collection Charavay, n. 574. Letter quoted in *Napoléon intime*, by Arthur Lévy, p. 116–17.

his wife on two occasions, in a letter dated from Tortone, June 15th, 1796, of his " melancholy presentiments."

This letter is very remarkable, and is yet another proof of his boundless affection for her :

" My life is one long nightmare. A melancholy presentiment almost takes my breath away. I no longer live ; I have lost more than life, more than happiness, more than peace of mind ; I am almost in despair. I send you a messenger. He will only stay a few hours in Paris, and he will then bring me your reply.

" Write me ten pages : a long letter is the only thing which can afford me a little consolation. You are ill ; you love me, you are sad, you are *enceinte ;* and I cannot see you. I have misunderstood you so often I shall never be able to make amends for my unkindness. I accused you of wanting to remain in Paris, and you were ill. Forgive me, my kind friend ; the love which you have inspired in my heart has bereft me of my reason ; I shall never find it again.

" No one is ever cured of that disease. I have such awful presentiments that I should be thankful if I could but see you, clasp you for two hours to my heart and then die with you. Who is taking care of you ? I suppose that Hortense is with you ? My affection for that charming child is increased a thousandfold now that I know that she is some consolation to you. As for me, I shall know neither consolation, nor rest, nor hope until the messenger whom I have sent to you returns and brings me a long letter explaining your illness and telling me if it is likely to be serious. If it is dangerous, I warn you that I shall immediately start for Paris. . . . I have always been lucky, never has fate dared to withstand me,

and yet to-day I have been felled by a blow which wounds me and me alone. I have lost my appetite; I cannot sleep; my friends are indifferent to me. I care nought for glory and for the fatherland; only you, you—and the rest of the world seems as if it no longer existed. I love honour, since you too love it; I value success, since it gives you pleasure; without that, I should have left everything to fling myself at your feet. My kind friend, be sure to tell me that you are convinced that I love you more than anything it is possible to imagine; that you are quite sure that my whole existence is devoted to you, that never an hour passes that I do not think of you; that the thought has never occurred to me to think of any other woman; that all women seem ugly, stupid and ungraceful to me; that you and you alone, such as I see you, such as you are, can charm me and absorb all the faculties of my intellect; that you have fathomed my very soul; that my heart has no recesses into which you do not look, no thoughts which are not all of you; that my strength, my arms, my intellect are yours; that my soul is in your body, and that the day when you change, or the day when you cease to exist, will see my death; that nature, that the earth is only fair to my eyes because you inhabit it. If you do not believe all this, if you are not thoroughly convinced, persuaded of these facts, you will grieve me cruelly; for it will show that you do not love me. A magnetic fluid connects those persons who love one another. You know that I could never bear to see you take a lover, much less allow you to take one: I should tear his heart out of his body if I were but to set eyes on him; and then, supposing I had the audacity to lay hands on your sacred person.

. . . No, I should never dare to do so ; but should the most virtuous woman in the world deceive me, I should bid farewell to life. I am sure and proud of your love. Misfortunes are trials which enable us to understand the depth of our mutual affection. A child as adorable as its mama will soon see the light of day in your arms. Ah ! unhappy creature that I am ! I should be quite content if I could spend only one day with you ! I kiss you a thousand times, on the eyes, on the lips. Adorable woman, what is the secret of your power ? I am very ill of the same illness which has attacked you. I am still tormented by a burning fever ! Do not detain the messenger more than six hours, and let him return immediately and bring me my sovereign's beloved letter."[1]

This letter, overflowing with love, true, sincere affection, is very singular in all respects. How Bonaparte humbles himself before the woman he adores ! He accuses himself, poor fellow, of having teased her to come and join him in Italy ! He did not know that she was unwell, that she was *enceinte !* The mere thought of her being ill makes him feel ill himself ! Was there ever a more passionate, a more affectionate lover ? No ! But there was never a colder, a more unsympathetic wife than the *citoyenne* Bonaparte. It was in order to postpone this journey which she could not make up her mind to take—she was so happy in Paris !—that she announced to her husband that she would probably soon become a mother, for she knew that she could easily tell him later that she had been mistaken. Besides, she never minded telling a lie ; she lied about everything, and she kept this vile habit all her life : she found it so convenient to lie

[1] Imbert de Saint-Amand, *La citoyenne Bonaparte,* p. 48–50.

when a lie could serve her purposes and hide her little peccadilloes. Oh! what a true woman she was! But what a trivial woman: she cared nothing for her dignity. Dignity? What is that? It is nothing anybody can see. . . .

Josephine was disgusted at having to reply to these absurd letters, as she sweetly thought them: she could not understand his passion; as she did not love him, how could she understand the language of love? And yet women, who know so well how to feign feelings which they do not possess, especially love, usually know what to do on such occasions. Notwithstanding the *citoyenne* Bonaparte's wonderful talent for not saying what she thought and for hiding what she did not wish to say, her natural indolence prevented her replying regularly to her husband's letters. This love irritated her, even though she was separated from the husband who would not leave her in peace; and, as nothing is more annoying than to be the object of a passion which one does not share, and to which duty, or rather good-breeding, obliges one to reply, she, after having read the general's amatory epistles with a hard expression which seemed to say: "I don't care," uttered a remark betokening mingled impatience and indulgence: "What a funny person this Bonaparte is!"[1]

Poor Bonaparte! how his love was misunderstood! His wife, in her good-nature, was kind enough to call him *funny!* . . . And he was three hundred leagues away, exposed to all the dangers of war, shot, bullets, fever! He had deprived himself of sleep; after long days of fearful fatigues, after protracted marches under the burn-

[1] Arnault, *Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire*, Vol. II, p. 292.

ing sun of Italy, he stole one hour from his all too brief moments of repose, in order to write this long letter to his wife, a letter which should have delighted her : well ! no, she thought it funny of him to write like that ! But the truth is that love-letters, read by strangers, always seem stupid. A strong, virile passion, such as General Bonaparte's passion, was not likely to be understood by his wife. Did he really love her ? Fie ! . . . Do people ever really love ? . . . Is marriage a serious thing ? . . . And do married people love one another ? Oh ! fie ! for shame. . . . Supposing they loved one another ? That would be a horribly middle-class thing to do ! it would be too dull for anything ! Certainly " this Bonaparte was a very funny person." Which meant, when it was she who said it, that he was really anything but funny.

What the superficial, indolent Creole really wanted was the homage of fops and fashionable dandies, the poor little attentions of rich, dissipated men, pastoral or boudoir flirtations in powder and patches, like Watteau and Boucher's pictures, with a touch of spice as seen in Fragonard's deliciously improper masterpieces ; passing love-affairs which cause nobody any pain, which neither wound the heart nor, what is far more important, bring wrinkles to the face : her forehead was so smooth ! it was like white marble ! Alas ! everything about her was as cold as marble, even to her heart !

And, what is more, the good *citoyenne* Bonaparte made no secret of her indifference to her husband. One day Bailleul, who had been invited to dinner by her, in speaking of her husband, asked her what she thought of him : " I think Bonaparte is a very honest fellow," replied she

quite coolly, as if she were talking of anybody but her husband. And Bailleul, who thought this reply worthy of being recorded, adds : " All this is neither very romantic nor very sentimental. This is a very different story to the pretty little anecdote of the young Eugène going to claim his father's sword from General Bonaparte. . . . The displeasure displayed by her during the course of this conversation explains, moreover, how it was that she replied so seldom to these passionate love-letters, or replied in two or three insignificant lines."[1]

It is quite certain that her husband's love-letters annoyed her. This Bonaparte was such a funny person ! Oh ! men are so hard to please. And love . . . is it worth troubling oneself about ? And then, if he really loved her as he said he did, why did he not leave her in peace without worrying her with missives which always contained the same thing : he was so fond of her ! Well ! she could not prevent him loving her, although it is fearfully bad taste to love one's wife—but for pity's sake, don't let him tease her with his affection ! She was his wife : what more could he want ? He brought her fame. . . . It was his duty, as a husband and a soldier, to do so ! but let him leave her in peace, once and for all, to follow her profession as a pretty woman ! As for going to join him in Italy ! oh ! dear no, it would be too ridiculous, nobody does such things ; had she accompanied M. de Beauharnais before the Revolution when he was sent to different garrisons ?

Fashion forbade her to go to the wars ; and was not the *citoyenne* Bonaparte a fashionable woman ? Alas ! she

[1] Bailleul, *Etude sur les causes de l'élévation de Napoléon Ier*, Vol. I, p. 138. Paris, 1834, Arthur Lévy, *Napoléon intime*, p. 113.

was that and nothing more ! . . . She loved the pleasures of a fashionable life ; " she really enjoyed the applause and the enthusiasm which greeted her wherever she went, whenever the news of any fresh victories reached Paris from the front " ;[1] and every letter brought the news of a victory. She positively revelled in the entertainments which everybody was only too glad to give in honour of the victorious general's wife. But, alas ! the flattering compliments which were showered on her made her completely forget him to whom she owed them ; and she was almost inclined to think that she deserved them for her own merits. How, indeed, could she be expected to understand that she owed them to her husband, to that pale, puny little creature, afflicted with the itch,[2] for whom she felt no affection ? Is it usual for the world to esteem men whose wives think them of no account ? " Isn't this Bonaparte a funny fellow ? " He still had to learn that fact.

The *armée d'Italy*, since Colonel Marmont had borne to Paris its first trophies, the flags wrested from the enemy, had gathered a fresh and even more abundant harvest of laurels ; these General Bonaparte sent to join their fellows in the Luxemburg. He chose Junot, one of his aides-de-camp, now major, to carry them to Paris and present them to the *Directoire*.

This very pleasant mission the young officer owed to his splendid courage, to the wounds won in battle, and to his blind devotion to his commander-in-chief.

[1] Arnault, *Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire*, Vol. II, p. 292.

[2] During the siege of Toulon Bonaparte, in handling a sponge which had lately been used by a gunner afflicted with that disagreeable malady, the itch, contracted the same complaint, which he did not get rid of for several years.

The *Directoire* was anxious to receive these *spolia opima*, the visible and glorious proofs of the success obtained by the *armée d'Italy* and of the incomparable bravery of its soldiers in great pomp. The *Directoire* also wished to profit by General Bonaparte's victories, and to show its own popularity and power by giving a patriotic *fête;* it fondly believed that the Parisians would think that the *armée d'Italie* wished to pay homage to the French Government by sending these trophies to the capital. And so the *fête* was as magnificent as possible. If we read the *Moniteur* for May 10th, 1796, we shall find a description of this *fête* written in the bombastic style of those days. The presentation of the twenty-one flags to the *Directoire* took place in the great *Salle des fêtes* in the Luxemburg palace. The minister of war introduced Colonel Junot (who had just been promoted) to the *Directoire*. Speeches and congratulations were exchanged, and then the president of the *Directoire* presented General Bonaparte's aide-de-camp with a sword of honour as a souvenir of this glorious day. The massed bands of the regiments then in Paris played in the *cour d'honneur* of the palace throughout the ceremony, and mingled their martial strains with the official congratulations of the brilliant groups of *directeurs*.

The *citoyenne* Bonaparte adored display and compliments. She took good care, as we can easily imagine, not to miss this *fête* which was sure to bring her before the public gaze and to procure her applause and compliments. Mme. Bonaparte in fact was queen of the *fête* on account of her beauty, which was still real in those days, and which was enhanced by the splendour of a spring-day and by that other and incomparable radiancy which happi-

ness always brings in its train, and which, for a time, can take the place of the radiancy of youth. Ah! what compensation this was for the balls given at the court of Louis XVI to which she had never been able to gain admittance! What a brilliant revenge this was! . . . Two other women, who were said to be the most beautiful women in Paris, were also present: Mme. Récamier, the young wife of the wealthy banker of the Chaussée, d'Antin, and Mme. Tallien; both ladies "were attired in the classic robes which were all the rage in those days and were covered with all the ornaments and jewels which they could possibly cram on at that early hour of the day (mid-day)."[1] However, Mme. Bonaparte's beauty, which consisted more in gracefulness and a peculiar charm of manner than in actual beauty as we consider it, was by no means put in the shade by her neighbours' personal charms. "She, too, thanks to her regular features, to her slender, elegant figure, and to the sweet expression of her countenance, looked lovely beside her two rivals, although she was less fresh-looking and less showy than they. I can still see those three women arrayed in costumes well calculated to display their peculiar charms, their heads adorned with wreaths of beautiful flowers, entering the *salon* where the *Directoire* was to receive the flags, on one of the loveliest days in May; they looked like the three spring-months, April, May, June, met together in order to celebrate the victory."[2]

The duchesse d'Abrantès also says that Mme. Bonaparte looked very beautiful at this function. "At that time," she confesses, "she was still very charming."

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 51.
[2] Arnault, *Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire*, Vol. I.

Gerard, pinxt

MADAME RÉCAMIER

From an engraving in the collection of A. M. Broadley, Esq.

But her admiration for Mme. Bonaparte does not prevent her seeing her friend's defects, for she adds to the confession which she has just made a detail which a mere man would never have remarked, or would have been charitable enough to pass over in silence: "Her teeth were dreadfully decayed; but when her mouth was shut, one would think, at a few steps away, that she was still a young and pretty woman."[1] It was certainly not a very kind thing to say, but it was the truth. Mme. Bonaparte's teeth were shockingly bad.

The ceremony of the presentation of the flags won by the *armée d'Italie* was one of the most splendid *fêtes* of that time. Everything helped to make it a success: the brilliancy of the cloudless sky, the wonderfully beautiful female spectators, Colonel Junot's martial bearing in his new uniform of colonel of hussars, the presence of the entire garrison of Paris, and the eagerness of the populace to applaud, in the person of Mme. Bonaparte and in that of Colonel Junot, the still youthful but already powerful hero of Italy, had caused crowds to assemble in compact masses in the streets and chief arteries leading to the Luxemburg. Everything had helped to make this day a success; it was never forgotten by those who witnessed it. Sometimes days come in the lives of the people as in the lives of private individuals, very rare unfortunately, but thrice blessed days, when the future clothes itself in roseate hues, when we behold a long vista of bliss, and we seem to hear the promise of peace, happiness and prosperity; but, as in the case of the people, so it is in the case of private individuals: unforeseen catastrophes nearly always occur

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 51.

and put an end to these happy days. It seems as if happiness could not last very long in this world!

The *fête* concluded, everybody went home; the messenger from the *armée d'Italie*, the happiest of the happy, escorted the *citoyenne* Tallien and his general's wife, and gave each an arm, as it was the custom to do in those days.

"We can imagine," writes the duchesse d'Abrantès, "that Junot was more than proud to offer his arm to those two charming women when, at the conclusion of the ceremony, they all left the *Directoire*. Junot was then twenty-five years of age; he was a handsome fellow, remarkably martial-looking. That day he was wearing a magnificent hussar uniform, the uniform of Bercheny; and the brave young messenger, who was still pale from wounds, the blood from which had stained these flags wrested from the enemy, had known how to turn to his advantage the splendid costume which added elegance to his appearance and made him worthy of the army he represented."

On leaving the *Directoire*, he offered his arm to Mme. Bonaparte who, as the wife of his general, had precedence over everybody else, especially on such an important occasion. He gave the other arm to Mme. Tallien and, with these two ladies, descended the staircase of the Luxemburg. The crowd was dense. The people pushed and shoved each other in their endeavours to get a better view.

"Ah! there's his wife! . . . That's his aide-de-camp! How young he looks! And how pretty she is!"

"Long live General Bonaparte!" cried the crowd.

"Long live the *citoyenne* Bonaparte! she is good to the poor!"

" Yes, yes," said a stout dame from the central market, " she's rightly called *Our Lady of Victory !* "

" Yes," said another, " you're right there. But look at the other lady on the officer's arm : she's *Our Lady of September !* "

" This name," adds Mme. d'Abrantès, " was horrible and unjust."[1]

Yes, it was a horrible name ; people were rather fond of giving nicknames to prominent public characters ; there were many persons who wanted to make a Madonna of Mme. Tallien, so they gave her the name of *Our Lady of Thermidor* which was infinitely more just and better deserved. Mme. Tallien had nothing to do with the September massacres. But this little sketch of the guests leaving the Luxemburg from the pen of Mme. d'Abrantès is cleverly drawn.

Madame Bonaparte would have preferred to remain in Paris rather than go and join her husband in Italy, the husband to whom she owed, however, the most splendid victory woman ever won : the victory of beauty, pride and glory ! For such had been the *fête* given by the *Directoire* at the palace of the Luxemburg.

But how could she put off the evil day ? She dared not try again : she had been obliged to confess that she was not *enceinte*. Junot was returning to Italy. She shuddered when she saw that she would be obliged to go with him. Bonaparte's orders were not to be disobeyed : " Junot is bearing twenty-two flags to Paris. You must return with him, do you understand ? "

Murat accompanied them. He had been sent to Paris by General Bonaparte in order to fulfil quite as agreeable

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 51–52.

a mission as that intrusted to Junot ; he bore the treaty concluded between Bonaparte and the King of Sardinia, after the armistice of Cherasco, and he had arrived in Paris shortly before Junot reached that city. The *Directoire* had been too glad to receive these good tidings not to wish to reward the bearers. Junot who had left Italy *chef de bataillon à titre privisoire* was now promoted to the rank of colonel ; he had hastened to order the magnificent uniform worn by him at the ceremony of the presentation of the flags. Murat, who was already colonel, was appointed brigadier-general.

Murat, during his stay in Paris, went frequently—too frequently, perhaps, if we believe gossip or rather slander[1] —to present his respects to the wife of his commander-in-chief; these visits, it has been said, led them to fail in their duty towards the absent officer. At all events she gave people cause to talk about her, thanks to her inconsiderate behaviour, which Joseph Bonaparte who happened to be then in Paris, reported to his brother, advising him to send for her. For the first time since their marriage, Bonaparte spoke out and ordered her to start.

At last the dreadful and dreaded day of departure arrived. It was June 24th, 1796. Mme. Bonaparte could not reconcile herself to the idea of leaving Paris. " Her grief was intense," said Arnault, " when she found that she could not get out of going. She thought more of what she was leaving behind her than of the husband whom she was going to see in Italy ; and she would gladly have given the magnificent palace which had been prepared at Milan to receive her, she would have given all the palaces in the world for her house in the rue

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, pp. 236–240.

Chantereine, for the little house which she had just purchased from Talma. . . . After having supped at the Luxemburg with a few friends of whom I was one, she started for Italy.

" . . . Poor woman ! she burst into tears and sobbed as if she were going to be tortured."[1]

Yes, her husband's passionate affection for her " had amused her " until now, as Arnault says ; but now it no longer amused her. Oh ! no. Why did she shed so many tears ? Why did she seem in such despair ? Whither were the cruel officers leading this poor victim ? . . . To the glorious General Bonaparte, to the hero, to the genius who had just conquered Italy, to the young husband who loved her so tenderly and who had had a palace prepared in the most magnificent style for her at Milan, a palace wherein she could forget that other palace where she had supped with her lively friends— her husband, in short, whom she could twist round her little finger !

She was, indeed, much to be pitied.

Ah ! if General Bonaparte had had any idea that his wife, who loved pleasure far too much to love her husband, before starting to join him in Italy, had supped with her friends at the Luxemburg like a fast young man who is going to marry and is burying his bachelor days with his boon companions ; if, what is more, he could have witnessed the scene of despair and wailing in which she, his beloved Josephine, without any shame or attempt at self-restraint, had indulged before her friends, it would perhaps have cooled his love, the love which he, child-like, bore for that other big child, his wife. He, with his

[1] Arnault, *Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire*, Vol. II, p. 293.

naïve inexperience of the ways of women-folk, thought it quite right that his wife should come and join him. Moreover, the Austrians were retreating on all sides, so she would run no risks in coming to Italy. He never dreamt that his wife would not see matters in the same light. He could not realize that Josephine was not like his mother, the brave Signora Letizia, who although *enceinte* " had, with her husband, often faced with heroic courage the dangers attendant upon expeditions in Corsica."[1] All young men with good mothers are alike ; they cannot realize the fact that other women—for they respect women-folk in general, especially when they love their parents and have been brought up rather strictly—are not as good and pure as their own mothers. They are therefore at a disadvantage when they go out into the world, that is to say, in comparison with other young men who are infinitely less worthy than they, but more experienced in the ways of the world and in love-affairs, and therefore more sceptical and less easy to dupe : unless they are clear-sighted enough to be on their guard against that bewitching and redoubtable rock which stands at the threshold of every young man's life : woman.

At last Josephine got into her carriage. She soon dried her tears in the company of her young and lively travelling-companions : Murat, one of the bravest officers in the army and one of the handsomest, although devoid of what we are accustomed to call distinction ; Murat who during his short sojourn in Paris had managed to get on the best of terms with Josephine ; Junot, who was quite as splendid a soldier as Murat, young, and

[1] Baron Larrey, *Madame Mère*, Vol. I, p. 249.

brave like him and, what is more, full of originality and good spirits; and lastly Joseph Bonaparte, brother to the commander-in-chief of the *armée d'Italie*, a well-educated man with pleasant manners. The journey promised to be amusing: Junot, however, did not find it so. It seems that Mme. Bonaparte, either because she wanted to amuse herself, or else because she really had taken a fancy to him, tried to get young Colonel Junot to make love to her. Now Junot was a true friend to his commander-in-chief. Nothing in the world could have made him fail in his duty and accept the infamous invitation seemingly held out to him. Mme. Bonaparte's waiting-woman travelled with them in the same carriage. In order to get out of the very tight corner in which he found himself, Junot pretended to be in love with her waiting-woman, Mlle. Louise, a tall, fine girl who combined the functions of lady's maid and confidential friend to her mistress. Mme. Bonaparte always made her dress like her, had her to dine at her own table, and treated her as if she were her equal. When Josephine noticed that Junot was paying attention to Louise, she felt rather annoyed; but when she perceived that her friend, the waiting-woman, was more than ready and willing to accept the handsome colonel's advances, she flew into a temper and refused to speak to, or to have anything more to do with her. Now Junot, who had only played this little game in order to save himself any further annoyance, thought it his duty, on reaching Milan, to see that Mlle. Louise did not suffer for her share in the performance; so he gave her compensation in the form of a carriage and some finery. Mlle. Louise's ambition was to rival her mistress, the wife of the commander-in-chief,

in luxurious living. Later General Bonaparte had her dismissed ; having fallen upon evil days, she came to beg her former friend, now the empress Josephine, to help her ; this the empress did. She gave her pecuniary assistance which enabled her to marry an English jockey ; the marriage, however, was not a success, and poor Louise died in great misery.

CHAPTER III

Josephine arrives in Milan—The Serbelloni palace—Mme. Bonaparte's court at Milan—General Bonaparte makes another campaign—He summons his wife to Verona—Anecdote concerning Fortuné, Josephine's pet dog—Josephine does not allow her husband to open her letters—She starts and rejoins the general at Brescia—She returns to Milan and is attacked by the Austrians outside Mantua—Bonaparte's love for his wife—First suspicions—The general's letters to Josephine—Disillusion and despair—Josephine goes to amuse herself at Genoa instead of waiting for her husband at Milan—Josephine's character—Josephine's lover, Lieutenant Hippolyte Charles—Forgiveness—General Murat gives a *déjeuner*.

AS soon as General Bonaparte knew that his wife had set foot upon Italian soil, he sent his aide-de-camp Marmont to meet her and to welcome her. Marmont met her at Turin and so swelled the already important escort which was to lead her to her husband's side with honours which would have been more suited to a queen. The palace of the duca di Serbelloni, one of the *grands seigneurs* of the country, had been prepared to receive her. General Bonaparte, in his affectionate solicitude for her welfare, had made this palace the most delightful abode one could possibly imagine. At last Mme. Bonaparte's carriage was reported to be approaching Milan; it appeared, it stopped. The general, who was anxiously awaiting his wife, received her with every expression of delight. He led her to the suite of rooms which he

had prepared for her and listened with delight to the marks of satisfaction which Josephine deigned to express concerning what she saw there. His devotion, his delicate attentions never ceased for a minute during the whole time he was in Italy, in that land where beautiful, enthusiastic women might have proved very successful rivals to Josephine in the affections of the young liberator of their fatherland. But Bonaparte only loved one woman, his own wife, and would not even look at any other members of her sex. Marmont, who in his capacity as aide-de-camp to Bonaparte, was very intimate with the young couple, wrote of them: "When once General Bonaparte reached Milan he became very cheerful; for he lived for Josephine and for her alone; this state of perfect bliss lasted for a long time; never heart of man experienced a purer, truer or more exclusive love, and that man was such an exceptionally superior person."[1]

Bonaparte could only devote a very short time to his wife; in those days, he thought that eternity would not suffice for him to show how deeply and truly he loved his dearest Josephine.

The Austrians were beginning to show signs of advancing. He left his wife in Milan and rushed off to win fresh battles and to gather more laurels.

Josephine, whose moods were constantly changing and who was never very long of one mind, soon forgot, when she found herself in the carriage, the tears shed in Paris and the cause of those tears; she likewise soon forgot the incidents of the journey. She took a cheerful view of the matter and determined to remain in Milan. The

[1] Duc de Raguse, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 188.

Serbelloni palace[1] was a magnificent building containing all sorts of pretty curiosities and those useless ornaments which she found so useful, those trifles of which her whole existence was made up, and which she considered far more valuable than him who had collected them there in order to give her pleasure. She had ceased to think of the friends in Paris without whom she had thought she could not possibly exist. And then, as we already know, she loved display. She could get as much as she liked of this commodity in Italy. As the wife of the conqueror of the Austrian army, she was accorded a most splendid reception; besides this, she received other homage which, although it was not official, was perhaps more agreeable to her; for in the first case it was her pride which was flattered, whereas in the second case, her vanity was tickled.

All the officers of the staff did not accompany the commander-in-chief; a certain number remained in Milan in order to attend to matters there and to insure swift communication with the army. All these gentlemen had been introduced to Mme. Bonaparte. Although the general was no longer there, they continued to come and pay their respects to her. In a foreign land in time of war, acquaintances soon spring up and become something more. These officers received a most cordial welcome; they were invited to come again and they did not wait to be asked a second time. A veritable miniature court was soon formed round Mme. Bonaparte, a brilliant court composed of gay young courtiers in the midst of

[1] The duca di Serbelloni, who had placed his residence at the disposal of General Bonaparte, was at that time president of the *Directoire* of the Cisalpine Republic and lived in the palace of the government.

whom the beautiful Creole, flattered and complimented to her heart's content, sat on her throne and received their homage.

Truly this life of luxury and pleasure ought to have contented the vainest of women. And Mme. Bonaparte was thoroughly contented with her lot. In the midst of all this happiness came a letter from Bonaparte written July 6th, a very short time after his departure :

" I have beaten the enemy. Kilmaine will send you a copy of the report. I beg you to come at once to Verona ; I want you, for I fancy I am going to be very ill. I send you a thousand kisses. I am in bed."[1]

We can easily imagine that such a letter was not calculated to please Mme. Bonaparte. What ! not content with making his wife undertake that long voyage from Paris to Milan, the general now wanted her to start off again before she had had time to recover from the fatigue of the first long journey ! He wanted her to go to Verona now ! What next would this selfish tyrant want her to do ? Where next would this eccentric creature wish her to go ? Was she a soldier that she must now follow the army ? For that was evidently what her husband wanted her to do. . . . He pretended to be fond of her, and yet all the time he tormented her. Was he afraid of falling ill ? But, great heavens ! he was only a little tired, that was all ! But she, she was very ill ; at least, so she wrote to him, for here is another letter from Bonaparte which proves it ; the letter is dated from Marmirolo, July 17th :

" I have just received your letter, my adorable friend ; it has filled my heart with joy. I am much obliged to you for the trouble which you have taken in sending me

[1] *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine*, Vol. I, *pièce* I.

news of yourself; your health must be better by now: I am sure that you are well again. I strongly advise you to ride on horseback, for you can only derive benefit from this exercise."

And further on, we read the same loving words, very tender, very passionate, and he expresses a hope that Josephine will soon come to him.

" I am always thinking of your kisses, your tears, your pretty fits of jealousy; and the charms of the incomparable Josephine kindle a strong, clear flame in my heart and in my senses. When shall I, free from all anxieties and all worries, be able to spend my time by your side, have nothing to do but love you, and only think of the happiness of telling you and proving to you that I love you? . . . I hope that you will soon be able to join me. A few days ago I thought I loved you; but since I love you, I feel that my love is increased a thousandfold. Ever since I first made your acquaintance, my love has gone on increasing; I love you more and more as each day goes by: which proves that La Bruyère's saying that ' love comes in the twinkling of an eye ' is false. . . . Ah! I beg of you, let me see some of your faults. . . ."

It was only because Bonaparte was so blindly in love that he could not see his wife's faults; but she was soon to open his eyes on the matter:

" Cease to be so beautiful, so charming, so affectionate, but above all, cease to be so kind. Never be jealous, never cry; your tears drive me to distraction, inflame my blood. Be assured that it no longer lies in my power to think a thought which is not of you and to conceive a plan which is not first submitted to your approval. Take

a long rest. Get well quickly. Come and meet me ; so that at least, before we die, we may be able to say : ' We passed so many happy days together ! '

" A million kisses for yourself and even one or two for Fortuné, although he is so spiteful."[1]

Fortuné was an ugly little mongrel[2] of which Josephine was very fond, an affection which Bonaparte had no reason to share. We shall see, however, that like all lovers, he tried to please the house-dog ; and he neither bore spite to the dog nor to its mistress for their unkindness. A little later, the conqueror of Italy, who had not been able to win either his wife's affections or those of her pet dog, said to Arnault while pointing to the hideous Fortuné who lay curled up on a sofa : " Do you see that young gentleman ? He is my rival. He was occupying Madame's bed when I became her husband. I tried to turn him out : I might just as well have saved myself the trouble ; I was told that I must either make up my mind to sleep elsewhere or consent to go halves. I felt rather cross, but I had to give in. I bowed to the inevitable. The favourite left me very little room and disliked being disturbed : I bear the proof on this leg."[3] So Bonaparte had been bitten by his wife's pet dog who was jealous of him wanting to share the soft resting-place, and did not like being disturbed—and that probably to the great delight of Josephine, who must have been highly amused by this little scene.

We must not blame Josephine for liking dogs : on the contrary, it was one of her good points ; and in caring

[1] *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine*, Vol. I, *pièce* III.

[2] " I never knew a more horrible animal " (Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 424).

[3] Arnault, *Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire*, Vol. III, p. 31.

for Fortuné, she was only fulfilling her duty as we shall now see. And then this little four-legged personage occupies such an important place in history that he is worthy of being introduced to my readers. The poet Arnault, who had the honour to enjoy his acquaintance and to belong to the *Académie française*, will now introduce him to us : " Fortuné," said he, " was neither handsome, good-natured nor nice. He was short-legged ; his body was long, his colour was more red than fawn-coloured ; this pug-dog, with a nose like that of a weasel, only resembled his distant relations by his black face and his corkscrew tail. In his infancy he had promised to be handsome, but as he grew up those promises came to naught ; nevertheless, Josephine and her children were very fond of him, when a sad event made him still dearer to them. Josephine, who had been arrested at the same time as her husband, was lying in prison suffering tortures of anxiety ; she knew nothing of what was going on outside the walls of her prison. Her children, together with their governess, were allowed to see her at the wicket-gate. But how could they speak to her in private ? The *concierge* was always present at their interviews. As Fortuné was also present and as he was allowed to go in and out of the prison, the governess contrived a plan by which she hid a paper containing all the news which she dared not impart to her mistress under a new collar which she then fastened round Fortuné's neck. Josephine, who was not wanting in shrewdness, guessed what she had done. The same messenger carried her reply. Thus she and her friends kept up an active correspondence under the very eye of the gaoler, and by this means she was able to learn of her friends' efforts to save her and so she

kept up her courage. The family were as grateful to the dog for his useful services as if he had known what he was doing, and he became, both to the children and to their mother, the object of a veneration which the general was obliged to tolerate whether he liked it or not."[1]

Real love, such as Bonaparte's love for Josephine, has nothing in common with the life of pleasure and dissipation which commonplace minds consider supreme happiness. So Bonaparte and Josephine could not understand one another. Annoyed by the letters of her husband, those letters which were always coming to spoil her pleasure and the amusements of the little court over which she bore sway in Milan, Mme. Bonaparte seldom replied ; and when she did so, her replies were very cold—as is proved by the words with which the general concludes his letter of July 18th :

" A thousand kisses as passionate as you are cold."[2]

These passionate kisses were powerless to warm Mme. Bonaparte's cold heart. In the following letter dated July 19th (the poor lover wrote to her every day !) he begs her pardon for having broken the seals of two letters addressed to her, and scolds her affectionately for her obstinate refusal to write to him :

" I have just received a messenger from Paris. There were two letters for you : I have read them. And yet it does not seem a very heinous crime to me, for you gave me permission to do so the other day."

But she soon withdrew her permission.

" . . . I much fear that you will be angry with me, which would grieve me deeply. I wished I could have

[1] Arnault, *Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire*, Vol. III, pp. 31 and 32.
[2] *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine*, Vol. I, *pièce* IV.

sealed them again. Fie! what a horrid idea. If I have done wrong, I beg of you to forgive me; I swear that I did not do so because I was jealous—no, certainly not: I have far too high an opinion of my adorable friend ever to doubt her fidelity. I wish you would give me permission to read all your letters: if you would do that, neither of us would have cause to feel remorse or fear. . . . I am going to send for the messenger. He told me that he went to your house and that you informed him that you had no orders for him. Fie! nasty, ugly, cruel, tyrannical, pretty little monster! You laugh at my threats and my folly. Ah! you know very well that, if I could take you in my arms and press you to my heart, I would hold you prisoner there!"[1]

What Bonaparte says to his wife is all very pretty, and this charming letter probably induced her to shake off her indolence—for once. The following letter proves that Josephine had at last written to her husband, for Bonaparte says in his letter from Castiglione:

"I hope that I shall get another letter from you when I arrive to-night. You know, my dear Josephine, the pleasure your letters give me, and I am quite sure that you enjoy writing them."

He actually believed it! Oh! how blind is love! But perhaps he said so in order to try and make himself believe something which he was beginning to doubt, or perhaps in order to coax his wife, by flattering her, to use her pen more frequently. Here is the conclusion of the above letter:

"I start to-night for Peschiera and Verona, and from there I shall go to Mantua and perhaps to Milan in order

[1] *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine*, Vol. I, *pièce* IV.

to obtain a kiss, since you assure me that your kisses are not cold as ice. I hope that you will be quite well again by that time, and that you will be able to accompany me to my head-quarters, and not leave me again. Are you not the soul of my existence and the queen of my heart ? "[1]

We see, by a letter written on the morrow, that Josephine had withdrawn the permission to open her letters which she had once given to her husband : he might have known that she would do so. Oh ! how much stronger indifference is than love ! The general gave in without a murmur, for every soldier has to obey his superior officer.

" . . . As for your letters which you do not wish me to open, this shall be the last time I ever do so."

Josephine had excellent reasons for forbidding her husband to open her letters. She seldom wrote to him, and when she did so her letters were very brief. And yet Bonaparte knew perfectly well that she had plenty of time to write and that she managed to find time to write to other people. But a lover is obliged to be content with lame excuses and even with the woman who makes those excuses.

At last Bonaparte wrote to her, July 22nd, in such categorical terms, ordering her to come to him, that she was obliged to make up her mind to start. The general had arranged the details of her journey as carefully as if he were arranging the march of an important body of soldiers.

" You tell me," writes he, " that you are in good health ; so I beg you to come to Brescia. I am now send-

[1] *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine*, Vol. I, *pièce* V.

ing Murat, so that he may prepare suitable lodgings for you in this town.

" I think that you would do well to spend the night of the 6th at Cassano, leave Milan late at night and reach Brescia, where the tenderest of lovers awaits you, on the 7th.

" I have a carriage at Milan which is equally suitable for town use and for travelling purposes ; you shall use it to drive here. . . . Take short journeys in the early morning so as not to tire yourself. . . . I shall try to meet you on the 7th, and will come as far as possible on the road."

So Mme. Bonaparte started and rejoined her husband at Brescia—not for long, though. Wurmser was flying to the aid of Mantua, which town was then being besieged. Bonaparte had not a minute to spare if he wanted to be prepared for the critical position into which Wurmser's march would be sure to put him, so he sent his wife back to Mantua. On leaving Brescia she was exposed to the enemy's fire, for the Austrian troops directed their guns at the military escort surrounding her carriage ; as two of the horses harnessed to the carriage in which she was travelling were killed by shots fired from the fortress of Brescia, she had to fly some way on foot and then hire a peasant's cart ; she was exposed to similar danger while passing close to Mantua ; however, she reached Milan in safety.

She was probably very annoyed with her husband for making her take this journey. It would seem, in fact, that she, after having seen with her own eyes how General Bonaparte was adored by his soldiers, ought to have reflected and asked herself why she did not return the

love of this man whose love for her was as tender as it was infinite ; how it was that she could not try to please him just a little when he was always thinking how he could please her ; how she could be indifferent to him when all Europe was singing the praises of the young general whose deeds, during the last few months, had far surpassed the exploits of the most illustrious generals whose names appear in the history of warfare, and who had covered himself with glory. And yet, surely she must have felt that it was her duty . . . but had she ever taken the trouble to think what that word meant ? Duty, if nothing else, ought to have made her take a pleasure in returning her husband's love. Well, no. When once she was out of General Bonaparte's sight, she cared less than ever whether he knew the real state of her feelings towards him or not.

It is a good thing that love places a bandage round the eyes of a man, be he ever so sharp-sighted, when the woman he loves deceives him. Although Josephine made no secret of her indifference to her husband, it took him another month to discover that fact. And yet his love for her was far from growing weaker. Read this letter ; it is dated from Brescia, August 31st :

" I am just starting for Verona. I had hoped to receive a letter from you ; your silence makes me horribly anxious, for you were not very well when I started. I beg of you, do not leave me in such anxiety. . . . How can you forget him who loves you so dearly ? Three days have passed since I last had a line from you, and yet I have written to you several times. . . . This absence is horrible ; my nights are long and tedious ; day seems monotonous. Think of me, live for me, be often

with your beloved, and remember that he dreads but one thing, and that is to learn that his Josephine no longer loves him."

But it was useless for him to write in this strain; Josephine seemed quite to have forgotten that the reason of her presence in Italy was because General Bonaparte was there, because he was commander-in-chief of the French army, and because he was her husband, her husband who loved her to distraction and who, when he got no news from her, suffered perfect tortures of anxiety. This is what he wrote, September 3rd:

"No letter from you. I am really anxious. They assure me, however, that you are well and that you have even made an excursion to the lake of Como. As each day goes by, I anxiously await a letter telling me how you are. You know how I value your letters. Life is not life when I am not with you; it is the joy of my life to be near my sweet Josephine."[1]

The love of some men is so steadfast that nothing seems able to shake it. The reason is that they have centred all their hopes, happiness and existence upon the loved one. But then we poor mortals find it so hard to confess to ourselves that we have bestowed our affections upon an undeserving object, and we shrink from making such a painful confession even though no other ear than our own hears it.

And Bonaparte was in this painful position. Only those who have gone through what he went through, loving Josephine as he loved her, can know what it means to worship a heartless flirt. And now read this letter; it is dated a week later than the previous missive:

[1] *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine*, Vol. I, *pièce* X.

" My dear friend, the enemy has been routed ; we have taken eighteen thousand prisoners ; the rest are killed or wounded. Wurmser was driven into a corner ; he was obliged to take the only course which remained open to him and to beat a retreat to Mantua.

" Never have we had such grand and continual success : Italy, Friuli and the Tyrol are now bound to fall into the hands of the Republic.

" We shall meet in a few days now ; that will be the sweetest reward for all my labours.

" A thousand passionate, loving kisses."[1]

A week later another letter comes from Bonaparte with fresh complaints of his beloved wife's laziness in not writing to him. But the scales are about to fall from his eyes :

" I write to you very often, my kind friend, and you write very seldom. You are naughty and ugly, as ugly as you are naughty. It is a horrible thing to deceive a poor husband, a tender lover. Must he perforce lose his rights because he is far away, overwhelmed with hard work, fatigue and anxieties ? Without his Josephine, without the assurance that she loved him, what would his life be worth ? What would he do ? "

Poor Bonaparte ! he does not know yet that one must not expect a woman's heart to be more affectionate than nature has made it. He thinks his Josephine is good, because he sees her as he would have her be, and not as she really is ; her thoughtless, inconsiderate behaviour has not undeceived him yet : he thinks that she loves him, because he sees her with the eyes of love. But take

[1] *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine*, Vol. I, *pièce* XI. Montebello, September 10th, 1796.

care, Madame! those eyes are beginning to see more clearly notwithstanding the love which has blinded them hitherto; jealousy is about to take up its abode in that heart which until now has trusted you so blindly. The letter concludes thus:

"We had a very bloody encounter yesterday; the enemy lost heavily and was finally routed. We took possession of the outskirts of Mantua.

"Adieu, adorable Josephine. The doors will be burst open one of these nights, and I shall rush in like a jealous lover and fling myself into your arms."[1]

We can see that the unfortunate man was beginning to feel the pangs of jealousy; he really seems to fear that his wife is deceiving him; he even goes the length of warning her, for her own sake as well as for his, that it is quite possible that he may suddenly appear in the middle of the night like the jealous fellow he is becoming. . . .

However, Bonaparte's numerous occupations and the necessities of war keep him longer away from his wife than he could have wished. But we must continue to peruse the letters written by Bonaparte about this time: no other documents can give us a better idea of the relations existing between husband and wife, nor, in consequence, reveal more clearly the character of the woman to whom Bonaparte had fettered himself, his love, his youth, and his fortune. We still notice the same indifference on Josephine's side, the same coldness which, however, is still unable to vanquish Bonaparte's passion for her:

"I have received your letters," writes Bonaparte, from Modena, October 17th; "I press them to my heart

[1] *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine*, Vol. I, *pièce* XIII.

and to my lips ; and the pain of absence, the weary miles which separate you and me no longer exist. . . .

" Your letters are as cold as if they were written by a woman of fifty years of age ; they read as if we had been married fifteen years. You speak of friendship and other sentiments suitable to the winter of life. Fie, Josephine ! It is very wicked, very cruel, very deceitful of you to write like that ! What can you still do in order to torture me ? You no longer love me ? Ah ! that has already come about. Do you hate me ? Ah, well ! so be it ; everything, except hatred, debases people ; but indifference has no feeling ; it is cold like marble ; its eye is glassy and its step monotonous ! A thousand kisses as affectionate as my heart."[1]

Affection, blame, nothing has any effect upon her ; nothing can conquer Mme. Bonaparte's apathetic indifference ; here is another proof, a letter written by General Bonaparte from Verona, November 13th, 1796 :

" I don't love you any longer ; on the contrary, I detest you. You are very ugly, very clumsy, very stupid, and very lazy. You don't write to me, you don't love your husband ; you know perfectly well what pleasure your letters give me, and you won't take the trouble to put six lines together ! "

For the first time Bonaparte hits the right nail on the head ; he is still half afraid to tell the truth, but anger puts the words into his mouth. Let us read to the end of the letter :

" What do you do with yourself all the livelong day, Madame ? What very important business prevents you finding time to write to your exceedingly kind and affectionate lover ?

[1] *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine*, Vol. I, *pièce* XIV.

" What affection has stifled and killed the love, the tender, faithful love, which you once bore for me ? Who is this new and extraordinary lover who occupies all your thoughts and prevents you thinking of your husband ? Josephine, take care ! One of these fine nights, the doors will be burst open and I shall appear ! "

We can see that suspicion is gnawing at Bonaparte's heart ; and we shall soon see that his suspicions were well-founded. But why did Mme. Bonaparte not write to her husband ? Had she no time ? He who spent his days in the saddle scouring the country and his nights making notes, reading reports, examining maps and dictating his orders, found time to write to her !

" In fact," he continues, " I am anxious, my kind friend, I have received no news from you ; write me quickly four pages full of those affectionate expressions which fill my soul with bliss and longing.

" I hope that I shall soon be able to press you to my heart, and then I shall cover you with a million kisses as hot and burning as if they came straight from the equator ! "[1]

Mme. de Rémusat writes : " I have seen the letters written by Napoleon during his first campaign in Italy. . . . They are so full of passionate feeling, we notice such splendid sentiments, such passionate and, at the same time, such poetical expressions, a love so different from all other loves, that any woman would have been proud to receive such letters."[2]

[1] *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine*, Vol. I, *pièce* XVI.

[2] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 146. Furthermore, Bonaparte, whose handwriting was shockingly bad, in order to save his dear Josephine even the slightest fatigue, did his very best to write legibly, in order to give her pleasure. One day when Joseph and

There was one woman, however, one alone, who cared naught for them ; this exception to the rule was the very woman who ought to have been most delighted to receive his letters and to answer them with a heart overflowing with gratitude. What a strange thing is life ! The most affectionate of mortals had fettered himself, his present and his future, to the woman who was least capable of understanding his love ! the greatest genius had made a love-match with the most insignificant of women, a woman who tried to make people forget her insignificance by flirting and by endeavouring to save the remains of her fast disappearing beauty ! What does Mme. Bonaparte care for phenomenal success, for the fame and glory of the commander-in-chief of the *armée d'Italie?* He is only her husband ! . . . Ah ! if she had been the wife of one of those coxcombs whose ill-timed attentions prevented her finding leisure to write to her husband, she would probably have never rested until she had obtained one smile, one glance from this incomparable soldier, from this young demi-god of whom the whole

Lucien happened to be with their brother at La Malmaison, the latter asked to be allowed to finish a letter. While he was writing the following little colloquy took place :

Lucien : " I pity anybody who has to read what he is writing."

Joseph : " He writes like a cat scratching holes in a sheet of paper ; his hand-writing gets worse every day. He never did know how to write ; but at least we used to be able to read what he wrote."

Lucien : " I know it, and he used to write very clearly and what is more (lowering his voice) very affectionately. Our sister-in-law has shown me a great many of his love-letters ; they are nearly all written in a pretty little feminine hand. . . . Has she ever shown them to you ? "

Joseph : " Oh ! dear, yes ; and I could decipher them quite easily. . . . If people would only take the trouble, they could write quite legibly. No matter how celebrated a lover may be, he wants his meaning to be understood whenever he takes the trouble to write " (Jung, *Lucien et ses Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 217).

world was talking, who was admired by Italy, France, Austria, Germany, England, by all nations and all classes —except by her! Why? Once more we repeat it— because he was her husband!

Finally Bonaparte, in his last letter, writes to his all too fickle spouse that he will soon appear. His love is very steadfast: it has resisted more than six months of indifference and bad treatment. He writes to her from Verona, November 24th, 1796:

"I hope soon to find myself in your arms. I love you to distraction. . . . Everything is going on well here. Wurmser has been beaten outside Mantua. Your husband only needs Josephine's love to be happy."[1]

Yes, a little affection on reaching Milan, only a little, and Bonaparte would have been perfectly happy! He loved his wife so dearly! . . . Oh! yes, a little love and all would have been forgiven and forgotten!

At last the day arrives, the day which Bonaparte thought would never dawn! Bonaparte reaches Milan three days after sending to his wife the little note which we have just read. He alights at the gates of the Serbelloni palace; he is in such haste to clasp his beloved wife to his heart, that he rushes upstairs without waiting to ask any questions, without waiting to listen to anybody. The poor fellow has not seen her for so long! . . . He pushes open the door of the room in which his wife is doubtless waiting for, and expecting him. . . . Happiness awaits him! . . . alas! he only finds despair and shame!

The nest is empty; the bird has flown away.

Josephine was not there; she knew perfectly well that her husband was coming, but the town of Genoa was

[1] *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine*, Vol. I, *pièce* XVII

giving some *fêtes* and so off she went to Genoa. What was more natural? Why should Bonaparte be jealous and discontented? Should not a husband be proud to see his wife enjoying herself?

This, in all probability, was not General Bonaparte's view of the matter; his peace of mind, his honour, even the last illusions of lost happiness, were at stake, and he could not look at the matter in the same light as those whom this conduct did not concern in any way and were only amused by it! This woman, his wife, was all in all to him. There was not a drop of blood in his veins which he was not ready to shed for her sake; he cared nothing for his success and his fame; he had but one object in the wide world, one pleasure, one wish, and that was to make his Josephine happy, to lay his honour and glory at her feet, such glory as never woman had before her. And by the most infernal fatality, there was only one woman in the world who cared nothing for honours and glory and for the husband who gave them to her; and that woman was his wife. Alas!

What bitter, cruel moments are those in which we discover the fact that we have been deceived by the one we love best of all, moments when we are suddenly cast down from the pinnacle of human bliss, when we awake from dreams of pure love and find ourselves bespattered with the mud of reality, when we suddenly see into the dark depths of the heart of the unworthy woman to whom we have given our love! Oh! those tortures of love betrayed, of trust misplaced, of honour deceived! those pangs of jealousy which eat into the heart and tear it to pieces! the shame of having been duped by a woman who laughs at you and at your love! Oh! the

humiliation of being nothing but a plaything in a woman's hand !

Bonaparte realized all this ; a thousand confused thoughts of revenge, love, hatred, rushed through the brain of the poor deceived lover : deep night, like a blot of black ink, spread over his mind, over his broken heart ; and it was with the bitter anger of love betrayed which he could not tear from his heart, so deeply rooted had it become, that he traced the following lines full of loving resignation, restrained tears and terrible despair :

" To Josephine, at Genoa. Milan, the 7th *frimaire, an V*, three p.m. (November 27th, 1796).

" I reached Milan. I rushed up to your room ; I had left everything in order to come and see you, and clasp you in my arms. . . . You were not there. . . . You were gadding about, going to entertainments. You go away just as I arrive. You no longer care for your dear Napoleon. Your love for him was the result of a passing whim ; inconstancy makes you indifferent to him.

" Accustomed to face danger, I know a remedy for all the ills and woes of life. The misfortune which I am now enduring is incalculable. I did not deserve such a blow.

" I shall be here until the 9th inst. Don't disturb yourself ; go to as many parties and entertainments as you like. You were made to be happy. Everybody is only too glad to be able to serve you, and your husband alone is unhappy ! "[1]

And who is the unhappy man who writes these heart-broken lines ? We repeat, he is in the heyday of life, a creature of genius, a hero, a demi-god whom the whole of Europe admires and envies !

[1] *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine*, Vol. I, *pièce* XVIII.

The poor lover cannot realize this crushing, and totally unmerited grief. He writes again on the morrow to the faithless Josephine. But, after having considered the matter very carefully, he begins to perceive that this woman is not capable of loving, that she is heartless; and yet, poor fellow, he still loves her! He only asks to forgive her, to forget the faults of the woman who forgot him. All this we notice in the following letter, full of bitter resignation and touching affection, which he wrote on the morrow:

"To Josephine, at Genoa. Milan, 8th *frimaire, an V*, 8 p.m. (November 28th, 1796).

"I have just received the messenger whom Berthier despatched to Genoa. I can quite understand how it is that you have no time to write to me. You have so many pleasures and amusements, you would be wrong to sacrifice any of your time to me.

"Berthier has kindly shown me the letter you wrote to him. I do not wish you to make any alterations in your arrangements, neither to decline any invitations which you may receive; I am not worth the trouble; and the happiness or unhappiness of the man who loves you is not worthy of your attention.

"As for me, my fate and my ambition in life are to love you exclusively, to make you happy and to do nothing which can displease you.

"Be happy; do not blame me for anything; do not trouble yourself about the fidelity of a man who only lives for you, who only enjoys life when you are happy. I was wrong to expect you to love me as much as I love you: why should we wish lace to weigh as much as gold? By sacrificing all my wishes, all my thoughts, every moment of my existence to you, I obey the influence which your charms, your disposition and your whole

person have managed to obtain over my unfortunate heart. It is my fault if nature has not endowed me with sufficient attractions to win your affection ; but I deserve that Josephine should sometimes think of me and esteem me ; for I love you and you alone with all my heart and soul. Adieu, adorable wife, adieu, my Josephine ! May fate give me all the trials and sorrows ; may it bestow prosperity and happiness upon my Josephine. Who deserves these blessings more than she deserves them ? When it has been proved that she is no longer capable of loving, I will hide my deep grief in my breast and I will content myself with being of use to her and good for something or the other. I open my letter once more in order to send you a kiss. . . . Ah ! Josephine ! . . . Josephine ! . . ."[1]

Josephine, on reading this letter, probably repeated, and this time in an impatient tone with a slight shrug of the shoulders : " What a funny person this Bonaparte is ! "

General Bonaparte's love was only equalled by Josephine's absolute indifference and inconceivable thoughtlessness. Hard-hearted, thoroughly and entirely selfish, she who has so often been called good-natured, because she was a good hostess and always accorded her visitors a very cordial welcome—which after all, was only polite and meant nothing—perhaps, also, because the term good-natured was taken in a sense with which kindness had nothing to do, was still capable of inspiring affection—although she was incapable of experiencing it herself. For we cannot call love those passing fancies, born of some chance meeting, the result of a journey shared together, or of some short-lived impression which she

[1] *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine*, Vol. I, *pièce* XIX.

never even tried to resist ; and we cannot even say for certain that her friendship for General Bonaparte was not the result of one of these passing whims. The coquettish Josephine must have been chiefly influenced by cold calculation. Such women, cursed with shallow, frivolous dispositions, who only care for gadding about, do not need a man's love, the love of a husband ; these women cannot perceive the difference between men of good feeling and idiots ; and they are incapable of being faithful, even for a short time, to the latter who, however, are best fitted by nature to act as their companions on their path through life ; they give themselves up to a life of dissipation, luxury, display, galas, and entertainments of all sorts ; they care for nothing but pleasure and flattery ; they love themselves and nobody but themselves !

And yet what a splendid position she might have filled by General Bonaparte's side, had she been a woman really worthy of the name, a thoroughly good, honest, warm-hearted woman. Although there are more foolish virgins than wise virgins in this world, there are still women, thank God (and they are more numerous than we think) who are not only intelligent but possess more solid qualities, who are warm-hearted, affectionate, faithful, self-sacrificing. France does not lack good women. And had Bonaparte married one of these women who, no matter what people may think, are far more attractive and a thousand times more easy to live with than coquettes with their lackadaisical airs and graces and their more or less transparent artifices, we may be allowed to think that the sharp corners of his somewhat wild, Corsican nature would have been smoothed by daily

contact with an upright, faithful and affectionate soul; such a woman would have taken the keenest interest in her husband's gigantic labours and his ultimate success; her prudent advice would have held his ambition in check and would have prevented him indulging in selfish plans for his own welfare in the future. Had he found happiness, peace and love at his own fireside, he never would have sought to forget his conjugal misfortunes in bloody warfare; he never would have been obliged to look for something to blot out the vision of the happy home which he had never known. A very clever woman once said: "Perhaps he would have been a better man if he had been more and, above all, better loved."[1] And that is why the good-natured Josephine, if good-nature consists in not being spiteful, in never being able to refuse anything, either to herself or to others—except to her husband—that is why Josephine was utterly unable to realize what a lucky woman she was. But what can we expect of women who neither understand, nor wish to fill, such a part?

We know the curious morals and customs which then existed among Italian families; Stendhal in his *Vie de Napoléon*, and General Thiébault in his valuable memoirs, have left us a vivid description. Every lady who had any pretensions to being in the fashion was accompanied by a sort of *cavaliere servente*, whose rôle consisted of performing whatever duties the husband neglected or disdained to perform. He ran messages for his lady and interviewed her milliner and her mantua-maker; he accompanied her to the play, to church and even went shopping with her—it is hard to say where he did not

[1] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 148.

accompany her. In short, he was the husband's substitute. These morals scandalized Mme. de Staël dreadfully during her first visit to Italy, and we know that she was not easily shocked. But our officers, who were all young and high-spirited and who, as Stendhal said, " were just the sort of men likely to turn a pretty woman's head," were not so particular. General Bonaparte had to endure more than one attack from members of the fair sex, among others from the beautiful Mme. Visconti ; but he loved his Josephine, and no other woman existed on earth for him.

Mme. Visconti, disgusted at her defeat, turned her attention to Major-General Berthier, whose age—he was probably the oldest officer in the *armée d'Italie*—made him more susceptible ; this was the beginning of the *liaison* which was to last until Berthier's death in 1815. Mme. Grassini, whose performances evoked thunders of applause every night at the Scala in Milan, had also fallen deeply in love with General Bonaparte ; but she was no more successful than Mme. Visconti, and she did not see her wishes crowned, as they said in those days, until nine years later when the Emperor of the French came to Milan to place the crown of Italy on his head.

Mme. Bonaparte, who was always up-to-date, doubtless wished to be in the fashion and to adopt the customs of the country to which her husband had forced her to come. Among the officers who belonged to Mme. Bonaparte's court in the Serbelloni palace was a young man, M. Hippolyte Charles, who was attached to the service of Lucien Bonaparte. He was " short but well-made ; his skin was very dark, his hair jet-black ; his eyes were rather fine as were his teeth ; his hands and feet were

very small and refined-looking. He was witty, but his wit was not calculated to please anybody who could pick and choose his companions. He was always making puns. He wriggled and twisted himself as he talked. He was what we call 'a jolly fellow,' and he knew how to make his listeners laugh;[1] it would have been impossible to find a more amusing person;[2] he was charming. . . . He wore a fine hussar's uniform covered with gold lace which he always kept very spick and span."[3]

These personal advantages were quite enough to attract Mme. Bonaparte's attention. Hardly had she reached Milan, when she began to take notice of him. M. Charles, in fact, who was then a lieutenant, had been sent to meet her by adjutant-general Lucien in order to congratulate her upon her safe arrival in Italy. Mme. Bonaparte had been kind enough to bring him back in her carriage together with her brother-in-law Joseph Bonaparte and Colonel Junot.

When once she had settled down at the Serbelloni palace, Mme. Bonaparte gave Lieutenant Charles, as well as many other officers then in Milan, permission to come and pay their respects to her. She had thought Bonaparte a "funny fellow"; Lieutenant Charles seemed even funnier and, what is more, far more agreeable. A great intimacy soon sprang up between this amusing young fellow, who only asked to be allowed to amuse himself, and this lazy creature who only asked to be allowed to follow his example. "He always breakfasted at the Serbelloni palace whenever Napoleon was absent visiting some neighbouring town. This fact was

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 212.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 174. [3] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 205.

known to everybody in Milan as well as to the whole army."[1]

So when she was invited by the municipality of Genoa to come and assist at some *fêtes*, Mme. Bonaparte, usually so lazy, she whom Napoleon had had such trouble to persuade to come from Milan to Brescia (it is true that it was in order that she might be with her husband), did not hesitate to go to Genoa. But did not M. Charles accompany her? And then, was she not going to be amused?

At that time General Bonaparte was still probably unaware of his wife's intimacy with M. Charles. But he must have learnt of it soon after; he either discovered it himself (for he was quite sharp enough to do that), or else someone kindly informed him of his matrimonial misfortunes.

At all events, one day a report was suddenly spread at the head-quarters of the *armée d'Italie*, that the commander-in-chief had had M. Charles arrested and that he would probably be shot in consequence. However,[2] General Bonaparte must have remembered that, notwithstanding his very legitimate desire to rid himself of M. Charles, it was not a case for military law; for, after all, the affair had nothing to do with M. Charles' duties as a soldier, which duties he had hitherto discharged with satisfaction to his superior officers. Mme. Bonaparte wept profusely; she was beginning to realize that Italian husbands were far less particular than her lord and master. "Far from taking offence at the *cavaliere servente's* attentions, any Milanese husband would have

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 205.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 205.

been much shocked if his wife had appeared in public unattended."[1] But General Bonaparte was not a Milanese, and he had the bad taste to share the ordinary Frenchman's prejudices concerning this delicate matter. And yet they were in Italy. He was wrong to put himself in a passion; he had better do as the Italians do. Was it not the fashion? And then, after all, he ought to have been pleased at his wife's success in society. But he was "so funny" with his old-fashioned, narrow-minded ideas!

General Bonaparte contented himself with dismissing from the *armée d'Italie* this officer who had become captain when Lucien, who was then adjutant-general, was appointed brigadier-general and married the beautiful Pauline Bonaparte, sister to the commander-in-chief.

It seems that this separation grieved Mme. Bonaparte deeply and caused her to shed bitter tears, for Mme. Lucien said later to Mme. Junot: "My sister-in-law nearly died of grief; but nobody dies of grief when they bid farewell to their friends. There must have been something more than mere friendship between them. . . . I consoled my brother who was very unhappy."[2]

Mme. Bonaparte knew that she would find her husband in Milan when she returned thither from Genoa; she had received all his heart-broken missives and she foresaw that their meeting would be stormy. But she counted upon her husband's boundless affection for her: in short, he had only spent two days with her since their marriage! so she trusted that her tears would bring him back to her side, and therefore she made up her mind

[1] Stendhal, *Vie de Napoléon*, Vol. I, p. 148.
[2] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 206.

to cry. She cried ; in fact, she cried a great deal, as she did later on whenever she wanted him to forgive her for something or the other ; anyone would have thought that she was the unfortunate victim of a jealous and suspicious husband. Bonaparte forgave her ; he forgave a fault which his compatriots seldom pardon ; but the anger of the wounded, innocent Corsican vanished into thin air at the sight of the guilty coquette in tears : he loved her so dearly ! His Josephine was his first love ; she represented his youth, his love, his glorious future, his illusions, his very existence ! it was at her feet that he had placed all his successes, his undertakings, his glory ! He sincerely believed that he owed everything to her and to his love for her. Oh ! how he loved her, his dear Josephine !

He forgave ; he even forgot, or tried to forget. But his eyes had been opened at last ; and he saw, notwithstanding his love for her, that his love was not returned. He was beginning to understand his wife, her incomprehensible frivolousness and her incurable heartlessness. He resigned himself to consider her as a pretty little animal, a sort of Fortuné, very capricious and very disagreeable into the bargain, at times, but whom he must continue to love, as she did not know what she was doing and was therefore not responsible for her own actions. And with a magnanimity only equalled by his love for her, he forgot.

And then, how could he do otherwise ? What bursts of ironical laughter would have echoed from one end of Europe to the other at the news that this genius, this young general, whose extraordinary victories were now being applauded by the whole of France, was deceived

by his wife, and that after they had only lived together for a fortnight at the most since their marriage! If he let people know of his conjugal misfortunes, what prestige, what power could he hope to wield in the future? How could he face Austria's formal, starched diplomatist? What if a smile, half pity, half sneer, should greet him? Or supposing he wished to open up peace negotiations with Italy, would he not fancy that the pope and his cardinals were laughing at him? Oh! no, he was quite ridiculous enough without making himself seem still more ridiculous by publishing to the world and his wife the news that he was now competent to play the deceived husband, one of Molière's favourite characters.

We cannot deny that there was a great deal of common-sense in all this. Bonaparte probably reasoned thus in order not to be obliged to part with the wife whom he still loved in spite of herself and of himself, although his love for her was undergoing a great change and about to become more like friendship, "as cold as love at fifty years of age." Was he, after all, different to other men, was he exempt from those little cowardly, hypocritical calculations, from those secret capitulations which we are often forced to make, and to which poor human nature is obliged to bend its head when it gropes about looking for an excuse, so that it may not be forced to give up the love, the habits to which it has grown so accustomed, and which it has not the courage to confess have become stronger than human nature!

Josephine also forgot. And this came all the easier to her because it was she and she alone who was to blame in the matter. In fact, she forgot with remarkable rapidity; and Bonaparte, while in Italy, had, on more

than one occasion, to call her to order. "During his first campaigns in Italy," writes Sismondi, "he had to dismiss several of Josephine's lovers from his staff."[1]

Meanwhile peace had been restored to the household. As always, it was the innocent party, who had no reason to reproach himself, who was obliged to promise to turn over a new leaf; and the conqueror of Italy was forced to ask pardon of his guilty spouse. No sooner had the general's love received a blow from which it was never to recover, when Bonaparte and Josephine began to get on far better with one another than they had ever done before; it almost seemed as if love had been an obstacle to domestic peace in this household. His passion for her was to give way to a sweet affection which never wavered —to the benefit, it would seem, of both parties. "It was during this brief sojourn in Milan that the young painter Gros made the first portrait which we possess of the general who is represented on the bridge of Lodi in the act of rushing forward, armed with a flag, in order to lead his soldiers to victory. The artist could not induce Bonaparte to sit for him. One day, however, Mme. Bonaparte took her husband upon her knee after breakfast and held him there for a few minutes."[2]

Josephine's inconsiderate behaviour in Paris in allowing Murat to pay such frequent visits to her house when he brought the treaty concluded between General Bonaparte and the King of Sardinia to the *Directoire*, was known all over Italy; this scandal soon reached the ear of the commander-in-chief of the French army.

One day General Murat invited several brother-officers

[1] Sismondi, *Revue historique*, Vol. IX, p. 363.
[2] Lavalette, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 193.

Lafond, je., delt. *Choubard, sculpt.*

JOACHIM MURAT AND HIS WIFE CAROLINE BONAPARTE,
KING AND QUEEN OF NAPLES

to breakfast with him. Naturally a masterful man, much given to lording it over others even long before there was any talk of him occupying a throne, Murat always chose his friends among officers of inferior rank to his own. His Gascon temperament, his ambitious yet easy-going disposition, already made him keenly enjoy gathering a little circle of listeners round him and being looked up to as a superior production.

We know what animation, high spirits and gaiety reigned among the officers of the *armée d'Italie*. Stendhal says: "Nearly all these officers were young, very enthusiastic and high-spirited; they were just the sort of men likely to turn a pretty woman's head."[1] It is very certain that they turned the heads of many pretty women; for M. Charles was not the only handsome man among the young French officers. We need only read Baron Thiébault's very interesting memoirs in order to convince ourselves of this fact. But the heads of these officers were even more easily turned when they were gathered round the festive board. This is what happened at a breakfast given by Murat when the general himself set his brother-officers a very bad example.

The little party had been extremely jolly and friendly; everything had gone off splendidly. The guests were already talking of separating and of when they should meet again, when General Murat cried:

"Before you go, I want you to drink some punch of my own brewing."

The general then began to boast of his talent for brewing punch. However, he had no reason to be proud of the fact; he had not got the recipe from his father,

[1] Stendhal, *Vie de Napoléon*, Vol. I, p. 138.

the innkeeper, but from a beautiful and charming young woman (and a Creole into the bargain), etc., etc. ; which details, as we can easily imagine, must have made his listeners very anxious to hear more.

He then sent for the ingredients necessary to brew the punch. " And above all," said he to his valet, " don't forget some Martinique rum, I mean Jamaica rum, you know what I mean—the rum I brought from Paris." The young fellows were quite awed by these preparations. When everything was on the table, General Murat went and took a curious silver-gilt utensil from a case.

" I say, what's that ? "

" This utensil is used for squeezing the oranges and lemons which we have to employ when we make punch in the Creole fashion ; it is a souvenir of my mistress and instructress in the art of punch-making."

The little instrument answered splendidly. Murat worked hard and his guests helped him ; so well did they work that, instead of brewing only one bowl of punch, they concocted several and drank them one after the other.

Murat, who was just as excited and no older than his guests, began to brag (happiness, champagne and punch had loosened his tongue) and told his friends that the beautiful Creole had showed him that trick and many others during a most charming private interview. He became still more confidential ; when pressed on all sides, he related "certain anecdotes which were eminently suited to an after-dinner audience composed of young officers."[1]

When he had done, he puffed himself out with a conceited, self-satisfied air.

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 238

What was the name of the beautiful Creole? Everybody had guessed it; it was needless to cross the t's and dot the i's; however one of his officers, on taking the silver-gilt lemon-squeezer in his hand, observed that some initials were engraved upon it.

"Oh! oh!" said he, "I was sure that I had guessed aright: ba, be, bi, bo—that's it; it's bo, isn't it? Bo . . . Bona. . ."

"Shut up!" cried Murat, quite willing that his guests should guess the identity of the beautiful Creole who had shown him so many pretty things, but unwilling that her name should be uttered.

The little party concluded, the guests returned to their respective regiments, and most of the details of the breakfast were forgotten, with the exception, however, of the facts that it had been very amusing and that General Murat was a first-rate host.

But that very same evening General Bonaparte heard all about the little party. He sent a message requesting Murat to give him the silver-gilt lemon-squeezer which had had such a success; but no one could ever find it again.

"That's a pity," said Murat, "it was a very artistic piece of work; I thought so much of it that I had my initials engraved upon it: J. M.: Joachim Murat."

"But somebody said it was marked J. B.?"

"Then they made a mistake; whoever said he saw J. B. must have seen crooked. It is not to be wondered at, however, for these Italian wines are as deceptive as the natives; and then we had champagne and punch into the bargain; it is very easy to mistake M. for B. But I'm sorry I've lost my little lemon-squeezer."

Be this as it may, General Bonaparte, fearful lest he should have been told the truth, did not wish to go farther into the matter and so he said nothing more. But he took a dislike to General Murat from that day, and when he afterwards drew up the list of those officers whom he wished to accompany him to Egypt, he took good care not to inscribe Murat's name. It was his intention at that time to make Josephine come with him to Egypt. Therefore he was angry and not a little surprised when Murat was appointed by the Minister of War to take command of a regiment of dragoons. Whose doing was it that Murat got this appointment? Oh! well, it was Mme. Bonaparte's doing, for she still liked Murat and she still had a good deal of influence over the *directeur* Barras.

CHAPTER IV

Bonaparte's passionate love for his wife changes to calm affection—Josephine wishes to return to Paris—Her son Eugène comes to see her at Milan—Bonaparte makes him his aide-de-camp—Negotiations are commenced for the treaty of Leoben—*Fêtes* at Milan—Josephine no longer talks of leaving Italy—Excursion to the Lago Maggiore—Mme. Bonaparte's life at Milan—Her *salon*—Sojourn at the castle of Montebello—All the members of the Bonaparte family come to Montebello in order to be with the general—Pauline Bonaparte marries General Leclerc—The two sisters-in-law are not good friends—Rival flirts—Mme. Bonaparte and Mme. Leclerc visit a wounded warrior—Portrait of Josephine—Death of Fortuné—Visit to Passeriano—Departure—Arrival in Paris.

AFTER the brilliantly successful Italian campaign, between the taking of Mantua and the signing of the treaty of Leoben, General Bonaparte, worn out by the fatigues of warfare and tortured by only too well-founded jealous suspicions, fell into a really pitiable state of ill-health. He was paler and thinner than ever.

"The *émigrés* said: 'He's so yellow and skinny it's quite a pleasure to see him!' And they drank to his speedy departure from this world."[1] As for the soldiers, they were so devoted to Bonaparte that they even admired their commander-in-chief's unhealthy appearance.[2] We do not know whether Mme. Bonaparte noticed that her husband was wasting away—she may

[1] Stendhal, *Vie de Napoléon*, Vol I p. 248.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 195.

have done so. But at all events Mme. Letizia, his mother, was genuinely shocked when she saw him in Italy.

" You are killing yourself ! " she said to him.

" On the contrary, I think I am very much alive ! " replied her son with a smile.[1]

However, he was now able to rest both mind and body. And then, now that he was beginning to recover from the first shock of disillusion, he was, as always happens after a crisis, when once he had made up his mind to bow to the inevitable, much calmer. He still continued to write his wife very affectionate letters. But Mme. Bonaparte's thoughtless conduct (which would have killed any other husband's affection) had had such an effect upon his passionate love for her, that that love changed completely, became a feeling of affection, " as cold as if they had been married fifteen years," to use one of the general's own expressions, but an affection which was to withstand the storms and vicissitudes of married life and which even divorce would be powerless to destroy. He still wrote to his wife, but passion had given way to calm affection and solicitude for her welfare, although the ashes of the now smouldering fire of passion glimmered from time to time and looked as if it would not require much blowing to make the sparks and flames burst forth with renewed force. But as Josephine made no effort to conquer her indolence, showed the same indifference to everything he said and did, and was as careless as ever in the matter of replying to her husband's letters, the fire never again blazed forth.

" I am still at Ancona," writes Bonaparte to her,

[1] Baron Larrey, *Madame Mère*, Vol. I, p. 258.

February 10th, 1797. "I do not send for you because matters are still rather unsettled; but I hope that things will be arranged in a few days' time. And then this country is in a very disturbed condition and everybody seems nervous.

"I start for the mountains to-morrow. You hardly ever write to me; and yet you ought to send me news of yourself every day. I beg of you to take walking-exercise every morning; that will do you good.

"I send you a million kisses. I have never been so worried as I have been during the present horrible war.

"Adieu, my sweet friend, think of me!"[1]

Three days later comes another letter in which the lover seems to have made up his mind to expect nothing but indifference from Josephine.

"I have received no news from you, and I am sure you no longer love me. I have sent you newspapers and divers letters. I start for the mountains immediately. I will send for you as soon as I know what is going to happen; the fondest wish of my heart is to have you with me. A thousand, thousand kisses."[2]

Why did Mme. Bonaparte not write to her husband? The reason is not hard to find. Marriage had made no difference in her character; she did not like to be bored; and as it bored her to write to her husband, to a man whom she did not love, she did not write to him—that is all. Then, in order to make him forgive her for her idleness, she gave the usual excuse "that she had been ill"; it was an easy excuse to find. Bonaparte, on

[1] *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine*, Vol. I, *pièce* XXI

[2] *Ibid.*, *pièce* XXIII.

hearing the news that his wife was ill, immediately became very anxious; this news probably rekindled his love for his wife.

On February 16th, he writes to her: "You are depressed, you are ill; you no longer write to me; you want to return to Paris. Won't you love your friend any more? This thought makes me very unhappy. My sweet friend, life is unbearable to me since I heard that you were depressed. I hasten to send Moscati to you, so that he may prescribe something for you. My health is a little uncertain; my cold still worries me. I beg you to take care of yourself, to love me as much as I love you, and to write to me every day. I cannot tell you how anxious I am.

"I have already told Moscati to accompany you to Ancona, if you wish to go there. I will write to you so that you may know where I am.

"Perhaps I shall make peace with the Pope, and then I shall soon be quite near you: this I desire from the bottom of my heart.

"I send you a million kisses. Be assured that my love for you is only equalled by my anxiety for your welfare. Write to me every day with your own hand. Adieu, very dear friend."[1]

So Josephine evidently wanted to return to Paris. Like a spoiled, self-willed child who does not like the house to which it has been taken on a visit by its parents, she cried: "I want to go away!" She did want to go, but not in order to join her husband. No! she now wanted to go back to Paris—as if she were not already far enough from him! She had not found Italy suffi-

[1] *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine*, Vol. I, *pièce* XXIII.

ciently amusing; she considered that "people had not made enough of her."[1] She wanted to be in Paris.

Wonderful to relate, her excellent husband did not get angry when he learnt that she had expressed this very uncomplimentary wish; uncomplimentary to him, at least. The thought never occurred to him that M. Charles, General Leclerc's erstwhile aide-de-camp and Mme. Bonaparte's amusing partner at the balls given by the Genoese municipality, M. Charles whom he had wanted to have shot and whom he had dismissed from the *armée d'Italie*, might now be in Paris. No, he never dreamt of such a thing; and we look in vain in the following letter for the slightest indication of any jealousy or bad temper aroused by her unkind behaviour. On the contrary, he does as all lovers do in the same circumstances: he asks himself what he can have done to displease his beloved, how he can have wounded her:[2]

"The peace with Rome has just been signed. . . . Bologna, Ferrara, and the Romagna have been made over to the Republic. The Pope gives us thirty millions and many works of art within the next few weeks.

"I start for Ancona to-morrow, and from there I shall go to Rimini, Ravenna and Bologna. Come to Rimini or to Ravenna if your health permits; but take care of yourself whatever you do, I beseech you.

"Good God! not a word in your handwriting! What have I done then? Do I not think of you and you alone? Do I not love Josephine exclusively? Do I not live for my wife alone? Do I care for aught except my friend's happiness? Do I really deserve such cruel treatment?

[1] Marquis Costa de Beauregard, *Un homme d'autrefois*, p. 363.
[2] *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine*, Vol. I, *pièce* XXIV.

My friend, I beg of you, think often of me and write to me every day. You are either ill or else you do not love me! Do you think, then, that my heart is as cold as marble? And do my troubles interest you so little? You can know very little of my real character. I cannot believe it. You, whom nature has endowed with wit, sweetness, beauty, you who alone might reign supreme in my heart, you who realize (all too well, doubtless) your unlimited power over me, write to me, think of me and love me.

"Yours for life."[1]

This letter was written February 9th, 1797, the very day on which Bonaparte signed, as we have already seen, the treaty of peace with the Pope. This was the last letter he wrote to his wife during the Italian campaign, or at least the last which figures in the collection entitled: *Napoleon's Letters to Josephine*, published by Queen Hortense in 1833.

It was about this time that the young Eugène de Beauharnais, Mme. Bonaparte's son, came to Milan. He was then seventeen years of age, and the commander-in-chief, who was very fond of him, took him into his service and appointed him to be his aide-de-camp. Although he, by his courage and his willingness to work, justified the hopes which his stepfather had placed in him, we must confess that we consider that General Bonaparte singularly overestimated the merits of Josephine's son.

The active period of the Italian campaign was now drawing to a close. The Austrians had been beaten at every turn; their armies had been annihilated: Beau-

[1] *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine*, Vol. I, *pièce* XXIV.

lieu, Wurmser, Alvinzi, then Archduke Karl, Austria's greatest soldier, who had covered himself with glory during the Rhenish campaign, one and all had been obliged to acknowledge to their cost the superiority of the French troops and the indomitable genius of the man who handled them so skilfully. Bonaparte realized that the hour for making peace had struck. He sent the Archduke Karl a letter written in the democratic tone beloved of his republican army in which he expressed in noble terms his desire to see all hostilities cease between the two countries. The French army was only about twenty-five leagues from Vienna. Austria had fought bravely, and, in a frenzy of patriotism which we cannot admire too much, had made heroic efforts to conquer her continual ill-luck. However, she had to endure the fate of all those who play a losing game. Prince Karl bowed to the inevitable, and April 18th, 1797, General Bonaparte signed the famous treaty of Leoben. He was back in Milan by the beginning of May.

From that moment Mme. Bonaparte talked no more of returning to Paris. Her life was, so to speak, a continual round of entertainments; dinners, functions of all sorts, addresses, speeches, followed one after the other. Presents began to pour in. She thoroughly enjoyed the applause which rose beneath her windows whenever she appeared on her balcony, as well as the enthusiastic ovations with which the delighted populace greeted the liberator of Italy. The little court which had gathered round her in the Serbelloni palace had been increased by a number of generals belonging to the army and to the staff of the commander-in-chief. All General Bonaparte's aides-de-camp were there: Marmont who, thanks

to his disloyal behaviour at Essonnes in 1814, was to bring about the emperor's abdication, but who at that time was one of the general's warmest and most devoted admirers ; Duroc, the future grand-marshal of the palace, he who was to enjoy the emperor's complete confidence and who was to be killed by a stray bullet the evening after the battle of Reichenbach ; Lemarrois, who was to distinguish himself by his heroic defence of Magdeburg in 1813 and 1814 ; Sulkowski, whom Bonaparte was so fond of and to whom the Egyptian campaign was to be so fatal ; Croisier, who was also doomed to perish during the same expedition ; Eugène de Beauharnais, who in 1814 was to have a hand in the overthrow of the Empire ; Murat, who was to have even a larger share in that catastrophe. . . .

But some of Bonaparte's aides-de-camp had gone to that bourne whence there is no return, and for a few days their absence cast a gloomy shadow over the brilliant entertainments given at the Serbelloni palace ; Muiron had been killed while shielding his general's body with his own at Arcole ; Elliot had been killed two days later ; Junot had been brought back to Milan covered with wounds and in a well-nigh hopeless condition ; however, the surgeon Ivan had promised to save him. Bourrienne, Bonaparte's old schoolfellow at the college of Brienne and who had now become secretary to the commander-in-chief of the *armée d'Italie*, was a remarkable figure, at that time at least, amid the members of this brilliant staff. His wit, his high spirits, his polished manners, won him Mme. Bonaparte's confidence. She all unconsciously allowed herself to be influenced by Bourrienne ; she saw everything as he saw it ; it was

Bourrienne who told her what she ought to do; little by little her frivolity and thoughtlessness gave way to Bourrienne's influence, an influence which she was to feel even after her husband's private secretary had fallen into disgrace.

The happy days slipped rapidly by beneath the blue sky and amid the perfumes of an Italian spring. The pleasure-seekers made excursions in the neighbourhood, to the Lake of Como and to the Lago Maggiore. Is not Italy a terrestrial paradise? Did not Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who was Nature's lover before he worshipped at his Julie's feet, also say so?

M. Miot de Melito has left an account of one of these excursions to the Lago Maggiore; it is so curious it is quite worthy to be reproduced here.

"We left Milan," says he, the 1st *fructidor* (August 18th), I was in Bonaparte's carriage with his wife and Berthier. During the drive he was cheerful and in high spirits; he narrated many stories of his youth and told us that he was just twenty-eight years of age. He was very attentive to his wife and frequently kissed her, which made Berthier and myself feel rather embarrassed; but his affection for this woman, who was as amiable as she was good, was so deep and sincere that we were forced to excuse his behaviour. However, the conversation often turned upon serious subjects; Napoleon himself would never say what he was thinking about. On one occasion Bonaparte, in mentioning Talleyrand's name, praised his wit, his parts, which praises were echoed by his wife. The conversation turned also upon other personages who might possibly play important parts in public affairs in Paris. . . . I cited Rœderer

and praised his keen, clear brain, his talents as a writer and his extensive knowledge. But Bonaparte showed extreme repugnance for him. He attacked him violently for his conduct on August 10th with regard to Louis XVI and his family. I defended him to the best of my ability, but Mme. Bonaparte would not back me up.

"After a drive made rather fatiguing by the great heat, although we had driven most of the way by night, we reached the shores of the Lago Maggiore and established ourselves in the magnificent palace built in the middle of the Isola Bella, the most beautiful of these islands which seem to rise from the bosom of the lake. . . . The snow-clad peaks of the Saint-Gothard and the Simplon mirrored in the calm, limpid waters of the lake; the Tessin pouring down from the mountains and mingling its waves with those of the huge reservoir from which it then escapes and, flowing through a thousand little canals, fertilizes the vast plains and fields of Lombardy; the smiling vision of little hills covered with dwellings, a vision which continues all along the lake northward, and the rich harvest with which the plains bathed by its waters southward were adored—all helped at that time of the year to make the picture which passed before our eyes more magnificent than at any other season. . . .[1] We enjoyed this delicious calm, such a contrast to the horrors of war.

"We spent two very pleasant days at Isola Bella.

[1] President de Brosses, in his letters upon Italy, gives us the following charming description: "The shores of the lake are adorned with wooded hills and mountains, with vineyards arranged like amphitheatres, with a few villages and country houses which make a very diverting picture. We saw some mountains covered with snow *which refreshed our eyes.*"

Every minute of the time was taken up by walking, bathing, or the pleasures of the table, and we were quite sorry to leave this enchanting spot and return to Milan."[1]

During the daytime everybody in Milan went to the Corso, the Longchamps of the Milanese, and took their customary drive. Let us now hear what a French officer has to say on the subject; he was seen nearly every day in the Corso during the campaign of 1800: "It would be most unseemly to miss a drive in what is called the Corso, where people meet their acquaintances and friends nearly every day of their lives. The carriages, after having driven once round the Corso, pull up one behind the other and remain thus for the space of half an hour. The French could not get over their astonishment at this way of taking a drive without moving. The prettiest women drive to the Corso in very low-hung carriages called *bastardelle*, which are extremely convenient as their occupants can converse with the pedestrians. After half an hour's conversation, all the carriages move on, that is to say when night begins to fall, at the ringing of the *Ave Maria*, when the ladies drive to eat ices (without leaving their carriages) at the most celebrated *caffè*, which, at that time, was the *Corsia de' Servi*.

"We can easily imagine that the officers of this young army took good care to be in the vicinity of the Corso at this hour, on the bastion of the East Gate. The officers belonging to General Bonaparte's staff had the best of it, because they were on horseback and could stop near the ladies' carriages. Before the army arrived, nobody ever saw more than two rows of carriages in the Corso; but in our time there were always four rows and some-

[1] Miot de Melito, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 175.

times six and they occupied the whole length of the drive. Those who arrived late made one round at a brisk pace between these six rows of vehicles."[1]

On returning from her drive in the Corso, Mme. Bonaparte had to " hold her drawing-room," as the general termed it. The officers, the big-wigs of the town, the Italian magistrates and their wives came to place at her feet the homage which she owed to her husband's talents. *Émigrés* also came to the Serbelloni palace : they were courteously, even cordially, received by Mme. Bonaparte, who had always had a weakness for everything connected with the old régime and anything which was uncommon. As for General Bonaparte he, either in order to suit his own plans, or else out of pity for these unfortunate creatures, or because he did not wish to displease his wife, tolerated these acquaintances. Among the few *émigrés'* wives whom Mme. Bonaparte saw was the comtesse d'Antraigues, formerly a singer and once known under the name of *la Saint-Huberty*, and who, after having become the mistress of the comte d'Antraigues, finished by making him marry her. Her husband, who had professed revolutionary opinions during the reign of Louis XVI and who turned an ardent Royalist as soon as the Republic was firmly established, had emigrated and had become one of the Royalist party's most active agents. General Bonaparte tolerated the presence of *la Saint-Huberty* in his house either because he hoped to make use of her (he had had the comte d'Antraigues arrested and put into prison), or because he still felt kindly towards her ; it was she, in fact, who in Marseilles had inspired him to write the only verses he ever wrote in his

[1] Stendhal, *Vie de Napoléon*, Vol. I, p. 145

life.[1] The former singer, for her part, only came to Mme. Bonaparte's house in order to obtain her husband's release, or perhaps to discover some secret which might be of use to him. One day a violent scene took place at the Serbelloni palace. Certain letters written by the comte d'Antraigues while in prison, clearly proving that he was a Royalist agent, were intercepted and handed to General Bonaparte. A few minutes later, Mme. d'Antraigues entered the Serbelloni palace. "Bonaparte received her with a violent tirade against this villain, this rascal who had rewarded his kindness by denouncing him. . . . 'Perhaps,' he said to her, 'perhaps your husband will leave his prison to-morrow, when I shall send him to you with ten bullets in his paunch.' *La Saint-Huberty* believed this threat; in her despair she had recourse to the tricks of her former trade; so with the air of a tragedy queen, she flung her little son, who was with her, at the tyrant's feet, crying: 'Why do you not send him to join his father? Is he not old enough to be butchered?' Then while the child clung, weeping bitterly, to the general's boot, she added: 'As for me, I advise you to have me shot, for I will murder you whenever I can.' On hearing her cries, Mme. Bonaparte rushed in, dragged her into another room, and tried to soothe her by kissing and petting her. *La Saint-Huberty* told her what had just happened."[2] We can see from the fact that Mme. Bonaparte received and patronized this royalist spy's former mistress that

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Histoire des salons de Paris*, Vol. II, p. 379.

[2] Léonce Pingaud, *Un agent secret sous la Révolution et l'Empire : le comte d'Antraigues*, p. 177.

The count and his wife were both murdered near London in 1812. *Translator's note.*

she was not very particular whom she knew. But really, had she the right to be particular? At all events, she had no intention of being so. When in Paris, she received M. Denon's mistress, who was one of her most intimate friends, as well as Mme. Tallien and many other women who led more or less irregular lives; later, when General Bonaparte was First Consul, he swept his wife's *salon* clean. Mme. Hamelin was also in Milan; Mme. Regnault (de Saint-Jean-d'Angély), whose beauty was famous for many long years and whose bad behaviour was no less famous, had come to join her husband; Mme. Léopold Berthier, sister-in-law to the major-general of that name, who divorced her husband a few years later and married the illustrious General Lasalle, was also there, as well as other women whose husbands had sent for them to come to Milan. The court at the Serbelloni palace was formed of these women.

In the evenings after dinner the guests used to assemble on the terrace as is the custom to do in Italy after sunset; coffee was drunk; then they returned to the *salon* and played at *vingt-et-un*,[1] and ate ices from the fashionable confectioners'; the soft, balmy air of a beautiful night in spring-time in Italy was wafted through the open windows, while the enthusiastic acclamations of the crowd assembled outside the palace showed their admiration for the conqueror of Austria. Everybody in Bonaparte's circle gave themselves up to these intoxicating pleasures; the general himself joined with them and treated one and all in an easy, friendly manner which almost amounted to familiarity."[2]

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 450.
[2] Duc de Raguse, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 297.

Meanwhile, hostilities having ceased, Bonaparte had written to his mother telling her to join him in Italy and to bring his brothers and sisters with her. His reasons for inviting them to Milan were rather particular. First of all, he really wanted to see his family, of whom he was very fond. Family affection is more highly developed in Corsica than in any other country, and we know that Napoleon, both when a humble lieutenant in an artillery regiment and when a powerful emperor, always did his best for his relations. And then it was just the right time, while his laurels were still fresh, to introduce his wife to the family to which she now belonged, notwithstanding Mme. Letizia's opposition, notwithstanding the objurgations of Lucien who had often met the beautiful widow at Barras' house,[1] and who had not been so blind to her faults as his brother Napoleon had been; for it was his unfavourable opinion of her which had prejudiced the Bonaparte family against Napoleon's marriage with General de Beauharnais' widow. And then Mme. Letizia had betrothed her daughter Elisa to M. Baciocchi, a subaltern, and the marriage had just been celebrated, May 1st, at Marseilles.

The family had omitted to ask the general's permission, or at least his opinion concerning the marriage.

At first Napoleon had seemed rather offended; but now, with the very laudable desire to be conciliating, he thought it would be a good opportunity to invite his family to come and stay with him and forget their mutual wrongs; for Lucien, too, had married without asking permission of his mother and of his brothers. And then Napoleon, whose success entitled him to act as the head

[1] Th. Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 212.

of the family, had determined to marry his sister Pauline, whose engagement to Fréron had been broken off, to one of the officers belonging to his staff. Josephine was to back him up; "she had much enjoyed preparing a charming suite of apartments for her young sister-in-law at the Serbelloni palace."[1] However, the Bonaparte family could not come until the last week in May, when the general, his wife and his staff would have already left Milan in order to escape the heat. Bonaparte had moved his quarters to Montebello about the middle of May; Montebello was a little town in the kingdom of Venetian Lombardy, midway between Verona and Vicenza, on the road to Venice.

He had chosen as his residence a castle in a pleasant situation sufficiently large to hold all the members of his family who were to meet there. The good fortune which the young general's fame had brought to all those who bore the name of Bonaparte ought, in his opinion, to have favoured and rendered lasting the ties which bound the Bonapartes and the Beauharnais. And then Mme. Bonaparte showed a great desire to further her husband's wishes. "Josephine," said Napoleon in his Memoirs, "behaved in a most dutiful manner towards her husband's mother, was most attentive to and very careful of her, and treated my sisters, without forgetting Baciocchi, equally well.

"The chief reason for this visit from my family was to bring about a reconciliation between Elisa and myself; she had just married and, in her happiness, had forgotten to consult my wishes."[2]

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 98.
[2] *Mémoires de Napoléon Bonaparte*, 1834, Vol. IV, p. 209.

This family reunion which afforded Napoleon the happiest moments in his whole life, if family affection and domestic peace constitute earthly happiness, was made the occasion of numerous *fêtes*. And then it was at Montebello that Mlle. Pauline Bonaparte married General Leclerc, the son of a rich flour merchant at Pontoise. She had become engaged to Fréron during her sojourn at Marseilles and had considered him as her future husband; but her mother and her brother Napoleon would not consent to the marriage. Junot, for his part, when lieutenant, had asked for the beautiful Pauline's hand; but the young people's lack of fortune had prevented the matter going any further.

The importance of the questions which were then being discussed at the castle of Montebello, the presence of General Bonaparte and of his staff, had attracted numbers of important personages, generals, diplomatists, delegates from several towns in Italy and also crowds of inquisitive people who wanted to see with their own eyes him who, though so young, had covered himself with glory. The little town of Montebello suddenly woke up as if by enchantment and became a very busy, bustling place. General Bonaparte was the centre, the very soul of all this life and animation; his wife did the honours of his house with that tact and good grace which everybody was obliged to allow she possessed and which she knew how to suit to all comers.

The days at Montebello passed as quickly as at Milan. As to the harmony which Napoleon so longed to see between the Bonaparte and Beauharnais families, it was not so complete as he might have wished. However, they seemed fairly good friends; but this friendship

was only on the surface. Mme. Bonaparte was most kind to her mother-in-law who, for her part, was very considerate for her and professed to be deeply attached to her: so General Bonaparte had at least cause to be content on that score. It was much the same with M. and Mme. Baciocchi, with Louis and Joseph, perhaps with Caroline, who was still only a child. But it was quite another matter with Pauline. This artful young person was "the prettiest creature one could wish to see and the most unreasonable one can imagine. She had no more manners than a schoolgirl, was always giggling at nothing, mimicking staid folk, and putting out her tongue at her sister-in-law as soon as the latter's back was turned."[1]

"Josephine was sensible enough and good-natured enough not to notice the mischievous tricks of her badly brought up sister-in-law who was not yet seventeen years of age; at the time of her marriage, Paulette had no reason to complain of all that was done for her and which would have been much less without Mme. Bonaparte's kind care."[2] And yet their dislike for one another dated from this visit to Montebello. "I have never seen such hatred between two sisters-in-law,"[3] said the duchesse d'Abrantès, who had been an intimate friend of Pauline Bonaparte ever since childhood. This, according to her, was the cause of that hatred: Mme. Leclerc was quite as fond of flirting as Mme. Bonaparte, and loved to be flattered and admired. These two women were apparently not content with the admiration of their respective husbands; or else Mme. Leclerc, who anxiously

[1] Arnault, *Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire*, Vol. III, p. 34.
[2] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 98.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 98.

watched over her brother's conjugal felicity, had perceived that a captain in a regiment of light horse, her husband's aide-de-camp (we know him), was more attentive to Mme. Bonaparte than to herself. Really, how could she pardon such an offence? The little plague probably had no intention of doing so. She listened to all the reports and slander which were being circulated among the staff and which had not reached the ears of the commander-in-chief. The arrest and subsequent dismissal from the *armée d'Italie* of Captain Hippolyte Charles must have dated from this time. It was also probably about this time that open war was declared between Mme. Bonaparte and Mme. Leclerc. . . . But have flirts ever been known to get on well together? As the rules of good society and the fact that they would have to spend some time together at the castle of Montebello obliged them to appear good friends, they managed to keep their tongues behind their teeth and to conceal their hatred for one another.

One day (it was at Milan, before General Bonaparte started for Montebello) somebody proposed that they should go and see brave Colonel Junot, the commander-in-chief's principal aide-de-camp, who was recovering very slowly from his wounds. So Mme. Bonaparte and Mme. Leclerc, together with Mlle. Louise, Mme. Bonaparte's waiting-woman and confidential friend, whom my readers may remember, went to see the poor invalid. This was before the visit to Montebello. Junot, who had been cut and slashed all over his body, had received strict orders to keep perfectly still. The ladies found him pale from all the blood he had lost, stretched on a sofa and wrapped in a white quilted dressing-gown. The

presence of these two beautiful young women brought a little colour to his cheeks. And, in fact, it was quite natural that his heart should beat somewhat faster. He had not forgotten the incidents of the journey from Paris to Milan made in company with Mme. Bonaparte and Mlle. Louise; and the appearance of these three visitors awoke strangely complicated memories in his breast. He was at an age when he could not see the beautiful Mme. Leclerc without experiencing a certain amount of emotion; for Paulette, as she was called by her family, had once been madly loved by Junot; he had asked for her hand in marriage, but his general had refused to allow his sister to marry a penniless lieutenant because, as he put it, *one must not marry hunger to thirst.* The sight of Mme. Bonaparte also reminded him that he had proved himself a true friend and had performed his duty with honour to himself, like a thoroughly honest man who loves his general as a lover loves his mistress—and this he had done at the risk of offending the beautiful Creole, for this is an offence which women hardly ever forgive. Even the sight of the good-natured waiting-woman Mlle. Louise was sufficient to bring a little colour to his face for, at twenty-five years of age, one cannot pretend to make love to a pretty girl without entering into the part more than one thought possible at first and without burning one's fingers a little; and so the young officer had never forgotten her who had been so obliging.

Junot was very pleased to see the ladies. Their kindness was unsurpassed; he could hardly believe his senses. They all chattered and laughed together. . . . Suddenly he felt faint; he turned deadly pale and his eyes began to close. . .

PAULINE BONAPARTE
From a pastel in the possession of Mr. John Lane

"Good heavens, Junot! what's the matter with you?" cried Mme. Leclerc.

Junot stretched out his arm towards her: the sleeve of his dressing-gown was soaked with blood; the action of moving his arm made the blood spurt forth and in a second Mme. Leclerc's white dress was covered with gory splashes. The bandage which kept the dressing in place had slipped down owing to the colonel's movement; a badly closed vein had burst open again and the blood had spurted out. The wounded man fainted dead away. When he recovered his senses, he found that his wound had been dressed and rebound, and that he was being petted and spoiled by the most charming nurses; in short he, who only a few minutes ago had been cursing his wounds and his compulsory inactivity, would not have changed places with anybody else for a great deal: he could afford to wait patiently for health to return. He had laid in a store of happiness which would last him many a long day. Are not women, who try our temper so when we are well, all-powerful to teach us patience when we are ill?

Mme. Bonaparte soon became quite happy again. No longer hampered by the presence of the Bonaparte family who had left Italy after Pauline's marriage to General Leclerc, she was flattered and made much of by everybody; she lived in a continual round of parties and amusements. Presents were offered to the wife of the glorious French general; she received some magnificent cameos which at a later and equally happy period of her existence, that of the consulate, made such a splendid ornament for her thick tresses at the entertainment given by the *citoyen* Talleyrand, then Foreign Minister, in

honour of the king and queen of Etruria ; the Cisalpine Republic sent her a pearl necklace ; the Pope, grateful to General Bonaparte for not having made a triumphal entry into Rome, sent her and him several pictures by old masters, valuable mosaics and other works of art. And then her husband, who had been more reasonable in the matter of love-making since she had taught him to obey her, left her more time to herself. It is true that clouds from time to time still hovered over the blue horizon of her existence and that storms were even heard rumbling about in the distance. The general's brothers scarcely cared more for their sister-in-law than Mme. Leclerc had done ; and they did everything which lay in their power to rule the general and to counteract Josephine's influence ; they never let an occasion pass in which to arouse his jealousy ; and the suspicions which they took care to keep alive in his mind were far from being completely uprooted. It was useless for Bourrienne, with all his talents for making peace and for persuasion, to try and make peace between husband and wife, he could not prevent the general remembering certain vague suspicions.[1] But Mme. Bonaparte never liked thinking about disagreeable things ; she always thrust them aside without taking the trouble to examine them. Was she not still beautiful enough to keep her husband's love, or rather, to maintain her power over him ? And did she not know the secret how to bring her husband back to her feet if he only dared to pretend to scold ? But indifference is quite as powerful as love, only it is powerful in another way !

While at Montebello, Mme. Bonaparte looked as hand-

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 19.

some as ever. Mme. de Rémusat says :[1] " Without being exactly pretty, her whole person was wonderfully charming. Her features were refined and regular ; her eyes had a gentle, soft expression " ; her mouth, which was very small, hid her bad teeth which, according to Mme. d'Abrantès, accounted for her continual simper ;[2] these bad teeth had one great disadvantage very disagreeable to those who stood near her and whose sense of smell was too acute ; her complexion, which was rather dark, was covered with paint and powder skilfully manipulated ; her movements were always easy and graceful ; she embodied the spirit of La Fontaine's verse to perfection : " Charm is even more lovely than beauty." But " her hands were thin, wrinkled and not very white. Her nails were always very long and were a bad shape, being much too square.[3] She dressed with great taste, and no matter what she wore she always looked well. . . . Besides all these good points, she was extremely good-natured,[4] for she was naturally kind-hearted ; and when her thoughtlessness did not prevent her doing a kind action, she could be really good."[5]

Her intelligence was below the average ; her education had been terribly neglected ; and, on more than one occasion in the old days, M. de Beauharnais had let her know it. Too lazy to make the slightest effort, the indolence natural to all Creole women prevented her trying to acquire the rudiments of education which she lacked. In the cultivated society in which she was called to live by her first marriage, she had acquired, in default of what she really needed, a certain amount of tact which

[1] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 149.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 417.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 424.
[4] *Ibid.*, same page.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 459.

warned her not to speak whenever people round her were talking of what she could not understand or of what she knew nothing about, " which, however, did not prevent people," says the duchesse d'Abrantès, " perceiving that she was very unintelligent."[1] And yet all these qualities and faults made rather an agreeable *ensemble* which pleased Bonaparte well enough ; he would even have thought himself the happiest of mortals if, to these very superficial advantages, a few solid good qualities such as a man loves to see in the mother of his children, those qualities which command our respect and esteem, had been combined. A true daughter of the eighteenth century, brought up in the futile and frivolous *milieu* where people took pride and pleasure in imitating the luxury and extravagance of the courts of Louis XV and Louis XVI and in aping such follies, she had scarcely even heard of that good quality which in womankind is termed virtue and of that other sterling quality called respectability ; or, if she had ever heard of these things, either her thoughtlessness had prevented her understanding their meaning or else she had quite forgotten it. . . . This unfortunate lack of education and good principles made people notice the fact that she was incapable of thinking seriously about anything and that she had no refined feelings. It was not in her nature to be serious-minded ; and that very lack of education prevented her realizing that she was frivolous. Her thoughtlessness was inconceivable ; she attached no importance to certain very vulgar conduct. While at Montebello, she, notwithstanding the fact that she was now between thirty-five and thirty-six years of age, behaved like a spoiled,

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 404.

self-willed child, obeyed her own inclinations in everything without stopping to reflect that they might lead her into trouble, and so vexed her husband on many occasions.

General Bonaparte was still in love with his wife, but that love had undergone a change, it was no longer the same all-absorbing passion. His letters show us that he was no longer in that blissful condition which not only prevents us seeing any faults in the woman we love, but makes us think that those very faults are good qualities. No, he was no longer madly in love with her: he had suffered too much from Josephine's indifference and inconsequent behaviour to be able to consider her failings as virtues. But on the ruins of this pure, perfect, yet despised love a steadfast affection had sprung up, something between passion and friendship, an affection which no longer absorbed his every thought as it had once done. So he was able to keep a watchful eye, not only over what was going on in Europe, but in Paris also, and he flung himself headlong into political schemes. After all, was he not the maker of the 13th *vendémiaire*? The 18th *fructidor* was also the work of his brain; although in far-away Italy, he managed to rule France as if he were actually there. With all doubts set at rest, confident in the success of the mission to Paris of his friend Lieutenant Augereau, he was able to think of putting the finishing touches to his task in Italy by concluding the peace which was to bear his name after he had signed the glorious preliminary treaty at Leoben.

The conclusion of the visit to Montebello was marked by a great sorrow for Mme. Bonaparte; this was the death of her pet dog, the unfortunate Fortuné. His

friend, the poet Arnault, immortalized his end, though not in verse. " This death," says he, " was most tragic. Naturally the favourite gave himself great airs ; he attacked and bit everybody, including other dogs. This conduct the dogs, who are less politic than their masters, could not always forgive. One evening, while strolling in the gardens of Montebello, he met another mongrel who, although he only belonged to one of the servants of the palace, thought himself quite as good as the master's dog ; this dog belonged to the head-cook. No sooner did Fortuné catch sight of the low-born cur than he rushed at him and fastened his teeth on the intruder's back ; whereupon the uninvited visitor turned on him, seized him by the neck, gave him one bite and killed him without more ado. I leave you to imagine Josephine's grief ! The conqueror of Italy could do nothing but sympathize with her ; he was genuinely sorry for this accident by which he was left completely master of the situation in more ways than one. But this widowhood was not of long duration. To console herself for the loss of a lap-dog, Josephine did what many a woman does when she loses her lover : she got another, also a pug-dog, so the race was not dethroned.

" *Carlin,* who had inherited his predecessor's rights and little failings, had already reigned for some weeks when the general perceived the cook taking the air in a little coppice some distance from the castle. On seeing the general, the cook tried to hide in some bushes.

" ' Why do you run away from me like that ? ' said Bonaparte to him.

" ' General, after what my dog did——'

" ' Well, what about it ? '

" ' I was afraid you would not like to see me.'

" ' Where's your dog? Haven't you got him any longer? '

" ' Forgive me, general, but I do not allow him to set so much as a paw in the garden now that *Madame* has got another pet dog.'

" ' Let him come as often as he likes; perhaps he will rid me of the other brute! '

" I like to relate this anecdote," Arnault adds, " because it is so characteristic and because it gives a good idea of the power exercised by the most gentle and most indolent of Creole women over the most self-willed and most despotic of men. His will, to which everybody and everything had to bow, could not withstand a woman's tears; and he who dictated his commands to the whole of Europe could not even turn a dog out of his own house."[1]

On leaving Montebello, Bonaparte went to Friuli. He took up his abode in the castle of Passeriano, a quarter of a league distant from the market town of Codroipo; this castle belonged formerly to the doge Manini. Mme. Bonaparte soon joined him. . . . " On the 24th *thermidor* she passed through Mantua and gave the generals the latest news from Paris, which was most satisfactory,"[2] for the 18th *fructidor* had been a complete success, as the general had hoped it would be. Bonaparte was quite elated by this news.[3] He would now be able to carry out his plans.

Passeriano was not a very amusing place for a woman who was so easily bored as Josephine was, and its amuse-

[1] Arnault, *Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire*, Vol. II, p. 34.
[2] *Journal du canonnier Bricard*, p. 273.
[3] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 264.

ments were less numerous than those of Montebello and Milan. However, the castle, which was situated close to Udine, on the left bank of the Tagliamento, was extremely comfortable. And then several members of her Milanese court had followed her thither, and her own particular friends, some of whom lodged in the castle itself and others in the environs, hardly left her time to be bored. And then her husband's aides-de-camp often came to see her when the general was conferring with the Austrian Minister Plenipotentiary. When these conferences were at an end, the diplomatists always came to pay their respects to her, and she frequently invited them to stay to dinner. First it was the comte Louis de Cobentzel, "the greatest frequenter of plays, *fêtes* and entertainments one could wish to see."[1] He must have been a prime favourite with Mme. Bonaparte, and they must have got on very well together notwithstanding the fact that his age was uncertain and his ugliness very certain. Still very frivolous, notwithstanding his age, a good talker whose chief ambition was to imitate M. de Kaunitz and to be told that he resembled Potemkin, he loved to tell the thousand and one stories which he had collected in Saint Petersburg when he was ambassador at the court of the empress Catherine—and he had only just arrived from Saint Petersburg. He was cousin to the comte Philippe de Cobentzel who was ambassador to Paris. There was also the marquis de Gallo, Neapolitan ambassador to Vienna. His talents and knowledge of diplomacy, apparently much overestimated, had obtained for him the honour of being chosen, although of Neapolitan origin, by the emperor of Austria to go and

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 431.

protect his interests at Passeriano. And it was he who had first opened negotiations at Montebello. And then came the general comte de Merfeld "whose singular fate it was always to be close at hand whenever Napoleon wanted to make peace or negotiate an armistice,"[1] and that other diplomatist, M. de Ficquelmont.

Besides these *habitués* there were many visitors; among the latter we must mention M. Bottot, Barras' secretary. Bonaparte was not exactly pleased to see this individual, for the general was perfectly well aware that the chief mission entrusted to him by the *Directoire* was that of which he did not speak. But a visit which gave General Bonaparte real pleasure was that of General Desaix, and their friendship dated from this visit.

All this coming and going made General Bonaparte's visit to Passeriano much more amusing. Josephine, too, found the time pass quickly, thanks to these visitors, to excursions in the environs, to Udine, to the ruins of Aquileia, etc., etc. She even went to spend a few days in Venice; those hours spent in visiting the city of the Doges made the months of absence from Paris seem less long to her. At last Austria, obliged to submit to the conqueror's will, signed the celebrated treaty of peace, called the treaty of Campo-Formio.

Bonaparte then started for Rastadt where a congress was about to be held. He was to be president of the French legation which had been commissioned to settle different matters concerning the German States according to the treaty signed with Austria. As for Mme. Bonaparte who, six months ago, had been in such a hurry to return to Paris, she remained with her son in Italy. The

[1] General de Marbot, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 317.

general had given her permission to stay; she was to start later, so that she might arrive in Paris at the same time as her husband.

On reaching Rastadt, November 30th, Bonaparte found a letter waiting for him from the *Directoire* summoning him back to Paris. So he immediately started off again and on December 5th he joined Josephine, who had just returned to the capital.

CHAPTER V

The *Directoire* gives a *fête* in honour of General Bonaparte—*Fête* given by the *citoyen* Talleyrand, Foreign Minister—Mme. de Staël makes advances to General Bonaparte—Josephine thinks her husband's behaviour vulgar—The general plans his expedition to Egypt—He forbids his wife to discuss politics—Marriage of Mlle. Emilie de Beauharnais to M. de Lavalette—Departure for Toulon—A carriage accident—The fleet weighs anchor—Mme. Bonaparte starts for Plombières—Purchase of La Malmaison—M. Hippolyte Charles at La Malmaison—Gossip—M. Gohier advises Mme. Bonaparte to divorce her husband—He refuses to allow his son to marry Hortense which Josephine was anxious he should do—News reaches Josephine that Bonaparte has landed—Josephine does not know what to do—Echoes from the banks of the Nile—Eugène de Beauharnais.

WHEN once in the capital, General Bonaparte, always kind and thoughtful of his relations, took care to send for his family and to see that they were comfortably lodged. He did not wish them to live in luxury and thereby give people cause to say that he had made his fortune in Italy. And so the Bonaparte family led a very quiet life. He would not allow any change to be made in his little *hôtel* in the rue Chantereine, and he led exactly the same life as he had done before his departure for Italy; he wished his home to be not only quiet but respectable also. He had "given Mme. Bonaparte special orders as to how his house was to be kept. Had those orders been obeyed, the victory over Josephine's natural inclination to be extravagant would have been even

more remarkable than the conquest of Egypt which he was about to undertake."[1]

Meanwhile the General and Mme. Bonaparte were bombarded with invitations to *fêtes* and receptions. The *Directoire* wished to receive the liberator of Italy with great pomp: it had already given a solemn *fête* on the occasion of receiving the glorious trophies which he had sent to Paris after winning his splendid victories. The *Directoire* felt obliged, not only for the general's sake and for the sake of the public, but for its own sake also, to give this grand reception in his honour. Like all official receptions, it was stiff and formal. There were nothing but speeches.

The *citoyen* Talleyrand, Foreign Minister, addressed the general in the most flattering terms; and Barras, in a speech full of high-flown compliments delivered in a bombastic style, made the walls of the Luxemburg re-echo again and again. Bonaparte's reply was short, abrupt, energetic, delivered in a tone of command. He had all the honours of the day. This was another triumph for Mme. Bonaparte, for it is always the wife who comes in for the largest share of her husband's popularity. Is it not for her sake, after all, that the husband pursues the fickle goddess? Another *fête*, which was remembered for many a long day and which is mentioned in all the memoirs of the time, was that offered to General Bonaparte by the *citoyen* Talleyrand. The erstwhile bishop of Autun, the priest who celebrated mass at the *fête* of the Federation, had obtained permission from the Convention to return to France. Mme. de Staël whose intimate friend he became soon got him made Minister.

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 424.

Although it was no longer necessary, as under the old régime, to study theology in order to become Minister, the fact that he had been in England and, what is more, America, gave him a certain amount of distinction ; the powers that were were kind enough to consider these facts equivalent to other and more valuable qualifications, and so the portfolio of the Foreign Ministry was given to him.

However, this was not done without a good deal of opposition. Carnot, among others, opposed this nomination with all his might. But women will have their own way ! . . . And then Talleyrand was so clever ! In short, he was so clever that, hardly had he been made Minister when he, knowing that flies are not attracted by vinegar, tried to curry favour with Bonaparte ; for although he may not have foreseen that the latter would rise to great power, he was sharp enough to see that he was about to become a very influential man in France. He wrote to him : " I have the honour to inform you, general, that the *Directoire* has appointed me Foreign Minister. I am naturally alarmed at the idea of filling a post which I fully realize is so dangerously important, and I feel the necessity of reassuring myself by the knowledge that your glory and fame will give me support and facilitate my task as a diplomatist. The mere name of Bonaparte is an all powerful auxiliary. I shall immediately send you all the plans the *Directoire* may commission me to submit to your approval, but Fame will often steal from me the pleasure of being able to inform the *Directoire* how ably you have fulfilled its commands."

This letter is a masterpiece of delicate flattery. It

accomplished the desired effect. General Bonaparte felt kindly disposed in favour of him who could express pretty things in such a pleasant way; and then he liked the men of the old régime who were beginning to rally round the young government; and so the new Minister's superior intelligence in paying homage to his genius and his clever flattering advances were and could only be well received. At the solemn reception given at the Luxemburg by the *Directoire* in honour of General Bonaparte, it was Talleyrand who, continuing the same line of conduct which consisted of getting himself received into Bonaparte's good graces, introduced the young hero to the *Directeurs*. His speech was worthy of his letter; it was somewhat lengthy. General Bonaparte listened to him as if he were some superior being who realizes that another superior being, whom he may need some day, is by his side and has need of his support.

Talleyrand, in order to complete his conquest of the general, had wished to give to him and to Mme. Bonaparte a *fête* worthy of his victories, worthy of the glorious peace which he had just concluded and worthy of himself. "He came to beg him to fix the day. He also begged Mme. Bonaparte kindly to give him a list of those persons whom she wished him to invite."[1]

The vast hôtel Galliffet in the rue de Grenelle, which was then used as the Foreign Office, was invaded by an army of architects and workmen who turned it upside down in their preparations for the *fête*. Four thousand guests were invited and the reception was expected to surpass all other *fêtes* in splendour. The invitations bore a very singular inscription to the effect that all

[1] Arnault, *Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire*, Vol. IV, p. 23.

Paul Chessay

LAZARE-NICOLAS-MARGUERITE-CARNOT
From the collection of H. H. Raphael, Esq., M.P.

those who were going to attend the ball were requested to wear no articles of English manufacture.[1] From that date it became the fashion, little by little, to wear French fabrics. The ladies' costumes were the most magnificent which had been seen since the Revolution. And so all the tradespeople were delighted at the shoals of orders which came pouring in and which were as good as any *fête* to them. If a woman had the bad taste to try and haggle over the price of her costume, the dressmaker would say in a superior, pompous tone which brooked no reply: "Oh, Madame, can anything be too fine, too costly if we want to *fête* General Bonaparte?" And if the lady, too poor or two avaricious to pay the price demanded, still tried to haggle, the dressmaker would reply with the air of a nobleman, but an ill-bred nobleman: "Well! take it! I don't want people to say it was my fault that a badly-dressed woman appeared at the *fête* given by the nation to our hero! . . ."

The dressmaker lost nothing by this little act of generosity (for this incident really took place); it was reported to Mme. Bonaparte, who expressed a wish that the dressmaker should make for her in future. This woman was the celebrated Mme. Germon. M. de Talleyrand left nothing undone in his efforts to make the *fête* a great success.

The staircase of the hôtel Galliffet was adorned with superb plants and shrubs. Orchestras arranged round the cupola performed beautiful music: this was a very popular innovation. The buffets where the guests were served with a profusion of the most exquisite refreshments were much appreciated and there was no pushing

[1] Stanislas Girardin, *Journal et Souvenirs*, Vol. I, p. 142.

or crowding notwithstanding the large number of invitations; the dancing-rooms were filled with an elegant assembly of guests who were delighted to see Paris become once more the haunt of fashionable society. Those who did not dance found plenty to amuse them and to help them pass the time in the card-rooms. At midnight the orchestra played the *Chant du départ* and everybody went to supper. The ladies took their seats at a table laid for three hundred guests. General Bonaparte stayed by his wife's side throughout the supper. He seemed to pay great attention to her; and a rumour spread among the crowd of guests who were paying equal attention to him, that "he was very much in love with, and very jealous of her." This rumour seems to have astonished Stanislas Girardin, who cannot help observing that "Mme. Bonaparte has lost her good looks; she is nearly forty years of age and she looks it."[1]

Bonaparte withdrew at one o'clock, but the ball lasted until eight o'clock the next morning. In short, the *fête* was most successful. "We encountered some difficulties," said M. de Talleyrand, "because we had to leave out those of the *Directeurs'* wives who were really too vulgar to be invited; and as all the *Directeurs* were very influential, it was rather a difficult matter. The reception-rooms were adorned with every possible luxury; I was complimented by everybody. 'All this must have cost you a good bit, *citoyen* Minister,' said Mme. Merlin, wife of the *Directeur* of that name, to me. 'It's of no account, Madame,' I replied in the same tone. Quantities of puns, nearly all more or less *à propos*, were

[1] Stanislas Girardin, *Journal et Souvenirs*, Vol. I, p. 145.

circulated all over Paris on the morrow."[1] Among these puns was one concerning Bonaparte which was immensely successful. Everybody had it by heart. Arnault tells it; and, although the duchesse d'Abrantès declares that it is not true, we must reproduce it here.[2] Mme. de Staël, who hitherto had been unable to get an introduction to Bonaparte whom she admired and whose wonderful future she predicted, tried in every way to meet him, for she was convinced that she would be able to conquer him as he had conquered Italy. But Bonaparte had no opinion of Mme. de Staël; he considered her a dangerous woman. He was not mistaken, as we shall see. Mme. de Staël had sent him, when he was in Italy, enthusiastic letters in which she told him pretty plainly that the widow Beauharnais was not a fit companion for such a great genius as Napoleon.[3] The conduct of this woman, who pretended to be his wife's friend and yet who was more than willing to alienate the affections of that friend's husband, rightly appeared to General Bonaparte as particularly despicable; and yet men find it easy to forgive these acts of perfidy when they are supposed to be prompted by love. However, Bonaparte only laughed at the letters and revelations which Mme. de Staël sent him by post. He even read some extracts to Bourrienne; he laughed at them and said: "Can you understand a word of all this twaddle? the woman is crazy!" In one of these letters, Mme. de Staël said:

[1] Talleyrand, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 261. "It's of no account," became a fashionable catch-word. The comte Dufor de Cheverny in his *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 170, tells us that a clubman in speaking of a nobleman whose praises had just been sung, blurted out, "He's of no account."

[2] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Histoire des salons de Paris*, Vol. IV, p. 258.

[3] J. C. Bailleul, *Etudes sur Napoléon*, Vol. II, p. 55.

" that they had been created for each other, that it was a great pity that the calm, sweet Josephine's fate had ever been joined to his; that nature seemed to have destined her fiery soul to adore such a hero as he was." General Bonaparte was disgusted at her impudence in daring to write such things. Had this happened a few years before, he might have been caught: but Josephine had got him fast now! However, he had learnt much since those days. And then, he was married! He tore the long-winded epistles into a thousand pieces and flung them on the floor saying: " Ah! yes, how can a blue-stocking, a scribbler of sentimental rhymes, dare to compare herself to Josephine? Bourrienne, I won't answer such letters! "[1] And he did not answer them. But he did not forget the words of the poet: *Notumque furens quid femina possit,* and he quite expected her to try and revenge herself for having been slighted. But we must now go back to M. de Talleyrand's ball. Mme. de Staël contrived to get near the general and to speak to him. This is how Arnault describes the little scene.

" ' I cannot speak to your general without an introduction,' said she to me. ' You must introduce me to him.'

" She overwhelmed Napoleon with compliments; he replied very stiffly to her advances; she, bitterly disappointed, tried every subject imaginable.

" ' General, what sort of women do you prefer? '

" ' I prefer my wife.'

" ' That is quite natural, but what sort of women do you esteem most? '

" ' Those who look after their own households.'

[1] Bourrienne, *Memoires,* Vol. VI, p. 217.

MADAME DE STAËL.
From an illustration in "Juniper Hall" by Constance Hill

"'That I can also understand. But what, in your opinion, constitutes an ideal woman?'

"'The woman who bears the most children, Madame!'"[1]

So saying, General Bonaparte bowed and left Mme. de Staël quite thunderstruck, but less angry at seeing her advances repulsed than at receiving this cruel snub in the presence of such a large audience.

On the morrow this little conversation was known all over Paris. Mme. Bonaparte heard of it like everybody else; but she did not approve of her husband's reply. In her opinion, the opinion of an utterly frivolous woman, a product of the old régime, she thought that Bonaparte's retort was vulgar and savoured too much of his middle-class origin. The fact that she had borne her second husband no family made his answer rather painful to her, and in fact she thought it altogether in very bad taste. Such was not the opinion of Mme. de Staël, who loudly declared it to be excellent, so that the general, whom she did not despair of captivating, might hear what she said. "As Mme. de Staël," retorted Bonaparte, "liked my reply so much, as she declares she did, although I did not make it to please her, I feel disposed to forgive her. And yet, see how their opinions differ! Josephine scolds me for my retort. She says that the Parisians will accuse me of preaching."[2]

And yet Bonaparte was not preaching at that time; and had Mme. Bonaparte known it, perhaps she would have been prouder of him; for she ought to have been so; her jealousy had not been aroused in those days, although it was soon to be awakened from its long sleep;

[1] Arnault, *Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire*, Vol. IV, p. 27.
[2] Jung, *Mémoires de Lucien*, Vol. II, p. 235.

in two or three years' time she, after having made her husband suffer so cruelly, was to suffer in her turn. A few weeks later, in speaking of Mme. de Staël to Joseph and Lucien, General Bonaparte said: "I am quite aware that I must change my opinion of her, or else you will think me hard upon her. As you and she are such good friends, you can encourage her to come and call upon Josephine, whom she has not seen for some time; the truth is that Josephine let her see that she was offended at what I had said (about loving my wife). But if she calls again, my wife will receive her quite differently. You see, my wife is really fond of her; they are old acquaintances."[1] Mme. de Staël did not break with Mme. Bonaparte and later, notwithstanding her banishment, notwithstanding her hatred of the Emperor, nay, perhaps because of that very hatred, she remained on good terms with her. In 1814, a few days before her death, she went to see her at La Malmaison more out of curiosity, we must confess, than out of sympathy for her.

This ceaseless round of *fêtes* and entertainments which Bonaparte tried to avoid as much as possible, could not prevent him working with all his might and main to carry out his plans. He, together with Lannes, Sulkowski and Bourrienne, made a tour through the north of France and paid a flying visit along the coast in order to inspect the forts. On returning to Paris after a week's absence, he hastened the preparations for the great expedition which, since his victories in Italy, had completely absorbed his mind. He had just been appointed commander-in-chief of the *armée d'Angleterre.*

[1] Jung, *Mémoires de Lucien*, Vol. II, p. 240.

The preparations for this mysterious expedition had aroused the nation's curiosity to the highest degree. Bonaparte, for his part, wished the secret to be kept as long as possible ; and it was not divulged. The English spies, who positively swarmed in Paris at that time, could discover nothing. And yet people talked of nothing but of what Bonaparte was doing, and his wife had to endure a good deal of cross-questioning. The general did not trust his wife's tongue ; not that she was given to backbiting, but she was too easygoing and, as we know, she never could refuse anybody anything.

Knowing his wife's inconsistency, he had already forbidden her to discuss politics, a subject of which she knew nothing, and above all he had advised her never to repeat what she heard or saw around her concerning the projected expedition. " Whatever you say is supposed to come from me," he often repeated to her ; " so say nothing. By so doing, my enemies, who are on all sides, cannot misinterpret your words."[1]

But he could not teach her the art of giving suitable replies to the insidious questions which jealous and spiteful people put to her. General Bonaparte's enemies about this time took it into their heads to spread a ridiculous report to the effect that the general owed a heavy debt of gratitude to his wife to whose power and influence over Barras he alone owed the favour of the *Directoire.* It was a ridiculous assertion, but does not the populace always prefer ridiculous reports ? This rumour was too flattering to Mme. Bonaparte's absurd vanity for her to take the trouble to contradict it. She did not do so ; this omission was very imprudent. Her reticence even

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires,* Vol. I, p. 426.

gave consistency to the rumour, and one day the report reached General Bonaparte's ear that " he owed all the government's favours to his wife's influence." He only shrugged his shoulders, repeated his commands to Josephine to say nothing, and made up his mind to carry out his plans. For he saw that it was time to act. " If I stay here much longer," said he to Bourrienne one day, " it will be all up with me."[1]

Bonaparte's appointment as commander-in-chief of the *armée d'Orient* is dated April 12th, 1798. But he had already started for Toulon on the evening of April 4th, eight days before his nomination was signed. He dined with Barras and went with him to see Talma play *Macbeth;* this celebrated actor was then at his zenith. His aide-de-camp, Eugène de Beauharnais, had left a few days before, immediately after the marriage of his cousin, Emilie de Beauharnais, to M. de Lavalette, and was waiting for him at Toulon.

This was a strange marriage, for it was concluded against the wishes of the two principal actors in the drama; and it was still stranger, considering the times and the society to which the young couple belonged, that they were both patterns of conjugal fidelity. Mme. de Lavalette's devotion to her husband in 1815 is well known. It was Mme. Bonaparte who arranged the marriage. Mlle. Emilie de Beauharnais was being educated at Mme. Campan's boarding-school at Saint-Germain. Louis Bonaparte, who was then his brother's aide-de-camp, often went to see his sister Caroline who was also being educated by Mme. Campan. His visits were all the more frequent from the fact that he always

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 32.

met Mlle. de Beauharnais who, on the occasion of their very first meeting, had attracted his attention. Always highly impressionable, he soon fell violently in love with the young schoolgirl. However, as he had to accompany the general to Egypt, he was obliged to leave for Toulon. The departure of the fleet was postponed, as we know, by the incident connected with the French embassy in Vienna, which matter had to be arranged before the fleet could weigh anchor. Mme. Bonaparte took advantage of this respite to marry her niece to M. de Lavalette. As for Louis who, like this young couple, was fated to marry, against his will, a young girl who did not care for him, he was very unhappy and his wife also : however, the later soon consoled herself.

Napoleon still loved his Josephine so dearly that, in order to enjoy her society a little longer he, not knowing for how many months or even years this far-distant expedition might not keep him absent from France, took her with him to Toulon. Lavalette, his aide-de-camp, had torn himself from the arms of his young bride in order to accompany him to Egypt and travelled in the general's carriage together with Bourrienne and Duroc.

Marmont, who like Lavalette was newly married (he had just married Mlle. Perregaux, the daughter of the rich banker of that name), has left an account of this journey in his memoirs.[1] The berlin which bore General Bonaparte, his wife and their three companions, was roomy and had a very high roof. Now on the top of the carriage was a mountain of baggage covered with an awning called a *vache*, no doubt because it was made

[1] Duc de Raguse, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 353.

of leather ; this is an important fact, because it was this *vache* which, as Marmont said, saved the lives of the travellers in the berlin.

In order to shorten the journey and to avoid passing through Marseilles, where they would have been obliged to spend some hours at the very least, General Bonaparte gave orders to take a shorter and less frequented road which passed by Roquevaire. The horses were galloping along ; the night was very dark and the occupants of the berlin were sound asleep. Suddenly the carriage stopped with a violent jerk. The travellers, startled out of their sleep, jumped out of the carriage. They then discovered that this very unexpected stop was caused by the pile of luggage, which had caught in a huge branch projecting over the highway. They also perceived that a bridge crossing a mountain stream a little farther along this same road, and over which the carriage would have to cross, had fallen in. So they blessed the lucky bough which had thus stopped the vehicle on the very brink of the precipice ; Marmont does not hesitate to consider it as " the hand of Providence." And he is the only chronicler who records this episode ; Bourrienne and Lavalette, who were also in the carriage, make no mention of it in their memoirs. At last, on April 8th, they reached Toulon after four days and nights spent in travelling.

The time passed quickly until April 19th, when General Bonaparte was to embark on the admiral's ship, the *Orient*. Mme. Bonaparte would have liked to embark with her husband, at least so she says in the following letter written by her from Toulon to her daughter Hortense, whom she had left at Saint-Germain-en-Laye,

at Mme. Campan's boarding establishment for young ladies :

" I have been at Toulon for the last five days, my dear Hortense ; I was not at all tired by the journey, but I was very sorry to leave you so suddenly without being able to bid you adieu, as well as my dear Caroline. However, my dear daughter, I am somewhat consoled by the hope that I shall soon embrace you. Bonaparte does not wish me to sail with him ; he wishes me to drink the waters before I undertake the voyage to Egypt. He will send for me in two months' time. So, my Hortense, I shall still have the pleasure of clasping you in my arms and of assuring you that I love you very dearly. Adieu, my dear daughter."[1]

So we must believe, although it is she who says it, that Mme. Bonaparte wished to accompany the general to Egypt : she was kind enough to do her husband the honour to offer to accompany him, firmly convinced, doubtless, that he would not accept her offer ; and then, perhaps she really meant what she said just then. After all, other wives, Mme. Verdier, wife of the general of that name, Mme. Fourès, wife of a lieutenant, etc., went to Egypt with their husbands. But neither Bourrienne nor Lavalette mention this unimportant fact. Constant alone mentions it.[2] M. Jung, in his learned

[1] *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine*, Vol. I, *Joséphine à Hortense, pièce* VI.

[2] Constant, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 41. In speaking of this incident, Constant makes a mistake which was afterwards repeated by all Josephine's biographers ; this mistake is of no importance, but, as it is a mistake, it ought to be rectified : " Mme. Bonaparte," says he, " wished very much to accompany her husband to Egypt . . . and by a strange coincidence, she wanted to cross on the *Pomone*, that is to say, the very boat which had brought her to France, while still a little

work: *Bonaparte et son temps*, tells us that Josephine refused to go.[1] Be this as it may, before the fleet sailed, Mme. Bonaparte expressed a wish, as was very natural, to inspect the vessel which was about to bear her husband to the coast of Africa. So one day after luncheon while Bonaparte was busy in his study, one of the naval officers named Najac, ordered a boat to be launched and he himself escorted the wife of the commander-in-chief on board the *Orient* which was then lying in the bay. Generals Berthier, Lannes and Murat, Junot, the aides-de-camp Lavalette, Eugène de Beauharnais and Sulkowski, accompanied her. MM. Régnault (de Saint-Jean d'Angély) and Arnault, who stopped at Malta and did not go on to Egypt, were also with Mme. Bonaparte.

At last the day of departure arrived. They took a very affectionate farewell of each other. Bonaparte was still extremely fond of his wife, although his love was less passionate than during his honeymoon; he was going away for a long time, in fact he did not know for how long it would be; it might be "for a few months

girl, from Martinique. General Bonaparte finally gave in to his wife's wishes and promised to send the *Pomone* to fetch her." General Tercier, who was at Martinique when Mlle. Tascher de la Pagerie left that island, for his part, says in his curious memoirs: "It was about this time that the vessel *Le Fier* sailed for France under command of Captain Turpin, taking her who was later to become Empress of the French. She was eighteen years of age, although the *Almanach impérial* has always made her out nine or ten years younger than she really was. I accompanied her and her family from Fort-Royal on board the vessel on which she embarked; I was, as I have already mentioned, very intimate with all the members of her family who went in a band and put her in charge of the captain, with a mulatto woman to wait upon her during the voyage" (*Mémoires politiques et militaires du général Tercier*, p. 21).

[1] Th. Jung, *Bonaparte et son temps*, Vol. III, p. 241.

or for six years,"[1] said he one day to Bourrienne. He repeated his advice to his wife, told her that he would make her an allowance of 40,000 francs (£1600) during his absence, which sum he had asked his brother Joseph to pay her. However, they had to say good-bye. They kissed each other for the last time; and while Bonaparte got into a boat and was rowed out to the *Orient*, his wife went to the commissariat; it was arranged that she was to stand on the balcony from which she could see the whole bay, watch the ships weigh anchor and wave her handkerchief to her husband as a last farewell.

The entire fleet began to move off. However, some little difficulty was experienced in leaving the roadstead. Several ships were so deeply laden that they grazed the bottom; but they were not obliged to stop. The *Orient* also touched the bottom. Those on shore saw her lean over on one side; the numerous spectators of this imposing scene were seized with anxiety; however, she soon righted herself and then majestically sailed out to sea amid the cries of the crowd and of the crew, to the accompaniment of all the bands belonging to the different regiments who were sailing in the fleet. The cannon thundering from the various forts and from the squadron itself supplied a magnificent bass to this gigantic concert.

As soon as her husband had gone, Mme. Bonaparte herself started, not for Paris, but for Plombières where, as she had written from Toulon to her daughter, she proposed to drink the waters. While at Plombières, she met with a terrible accident which nearly cost her her life. She was sitting in the balcony of her house with several ladies when the balcony, which was made

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 49.

of wood, suddenly collapsed, dragging with it all the occupants. Although Mme. Bonaparte was rather badly hurt by her fall, she soon got over this accident. It merely obliged her to prolong her stay at Plombières, and so she did not return to Paris until the end of September.

While General Bonaparte was in Italy, Josephine, to whom her husband had expressed a wish to purchase a country-house in the environs of Paris, bought La Malmaison. This is how it came about: Isabey, the friend of Mme. Lecoulteux de Canteleu to whom La Malmaison belonged, having told that lady that Mme. Bonaparte was anxious to buy a country-house, Mme. Lecoulteux commissioned him to mention the fact to Josephine that she was willing to part with La Malmaison. Mme. Bonaparte came with Isabey to inspect the property and immediately settled to buy it.

La Malmaison had formerly belonged to the State and had been bought by M. Lecoulteux in 1793; Bourrienne says[1] that this gentleman sold it to Mme. Bonaparte for the sum of 160,000 francs (£6400). Of this price, which was considered very considerable at that time, Mme. Bonaparte only gave a very small instalment; and, as nobody worried her to pay the rest, she thought no more about her debt to M. Lecoulteux than about any other of her debts; the matter, like everything else, could be arranged sooner or later. Mme. Bonaparte neither liked to think of disagreeable things nor to look difficulties in the face; and in this she was like the ostrich which, when it is being chased by hunters, hides its head in the nearest bush and thinks itself safe because it cannot see

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. IV, p. 29.

the danger. And then, the price asked for La Malmaison was very heavy; but this little detail did not prevent Mme. Bonaparte buying it any more than the fact that it bore the name of *Malmaison*, which means *the house with a curse*. Had she thought of it, she who was as superstitious as it is possible to be, perhaps she would not have purchased this property. But then La Malmaison " was a pretty, pleasant country-place with very agreeable surroundings; but the house itself was very uncomfortable and, what was more, extremely unhealthy. Mme. Bonaparte had bought it in a hurry, just like a child buys a doll which pleases it without stopping to think whether it will care for its purchase in a year's time. The park was not large—it was like a pretty English garden—and the *château* was in a ruinous condition. The park, which was enclosed by a wall, began at the end of the lawn in front of the *château* and stretched along the highroad towards Saint-Germain. There was also a ha-ha, on the top of which was a little iron railing on which one could lean in order to look down the road; but people standing in the road could also easily see into the park. . . . La Malmaison was just a pretty country-seat and nothing more."[1]

Mme. Bonaparte, in haste to enjoy her new purchase, immediately established herself at La Malmaison.

She had the walls hung with superb pictures by old masters which had been given to her by the Pope and by various Italian cities; she had the marble statues, which had been presented to the soldier-conqueror of the armies of Austria, placed in her park and in the corridors of the house; her *salons* were adorned with

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 209.

magnificent Florentine mosaics, and she needed not only coffers and boxes but huge oak chests and cupboards in which to store the prodigious collection of pearls, diamonds and cameos which she owned and which was worthy to figure in the Arabian Nights' Entertainments and to which she was always adding."[1]

Mme. Bonaparte ought to have been able to manage very comfortably on the allowance of 40,000 francs which her husband had charged Joseph to pay her. But it was not so ; her untidiness and her wastefulness were worse than ever. " Notwithstanding all this wealth," says Mme. de Rémusat, after giving a list of her jewels, " Mme. Bonaparte was often at a loss how to pay her weekly bills ; and in order to get herself out of a hobble, she tried to obtain money by promising to further her creditors' interests with her influential friends."[2]

She now only came up to Paris at rare intervals. The reason for this was not because she grieved for her husband, because she missed him, the husband who was exposed to all kinds of danger, in a merciless war when " no prisoners " was the battle-cry, in a murderous climate, in the midst of a terrible epidemic of plague. No, such reasons would not have made her determine to await his return in seclusion, in company with her memories, her love for him and her hopes for the future ; on the contrary, whenever she did go up to Paris, it was to attend the *fêtes*, soirées, concerts and suppers given by the young licentious Barras, the *directeur*, whose acquaintance she had made through Mme. Tallien ; she

[1] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 446.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 209.

also became very intimate with Rewbel whom she wished to gain over to her side.[1] And then she had met in Paris one of her old *friends* belonging to the *armée d'Italie*, M. Hippolyte Charles, that captain of light horse, General Leclerc's former aide-de-camp whom we have not forgotten. They soon became great friends again. M. Charles told her how, since General Bonaparte had ruined his future by his inexplicable severity, he had been unable to find suitable employment. Mme. Bonaparte was good-natured and loved to do a kind act " whenever her acts of kindness entailed no sacrifice on her part."[2] So she made up her mind to play the part of Lady Bountiful towards M. Charles. She thought it her duty to make amends for her husband's unjust behaviour towards this young man and for the injury which he had sustained through the general's anger. Thanks to her influence, which she owed entirely to General Bonaparte's glory and fame, she was able to get M. Charles admitted as partner in M. Bodin's company for supplying provisions to the army :[3] this was just the very thing he wanted. As he was sharp, he soon got on in his profession and made a tidy little fortune at the expense of the unlucky soldiers who had to eat his provisions, and he very soon had carriages and horses and was able to cut a respectable figure among the little group of financiers with whom he had begun to associate.

M. Charles was not ungrateful. He went to La Malmaison in order to thank her who had kindly remembered the poor officer of the *armée d'Italie* and had accorded him her protection. We know that he was a handsome

[1] *Souvenirs et correspondance de Mme. Récamier*, Vol. I, p. 22–3.
[2] Th. Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 211.
[3] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 207.

fellow, very witty, or at least "he was always making puns; he wriggled and twisted his body all the time he was talking," he was "an amusing fellow," and, as in Italy, Mme. Bonaparte was bored by her husband's absence. . . . Besides which, people thought that the general might never return from this expedition to Egypt. . . . In short, M. Charles remained at La Malmaison.

Meanwhile, as Mme. Bonaparte hardly ever left the grounds of her country-house, the good folk in the neighbourhood expressed themselves much edified by her conduct. She could be seen from the highroad sauntering through the park on moonlight nights, clad in a white dress, her head enveloped in a gauze scarf; these honest folk said that she was always accompanied by her *son*, dressed in a blue or black jacket, who seemed very anxious to console her for her husband's absence and to encourage her to hope for a speedy return—she used to gaze up to heaven, lean pensively on his arm and then disappear with him under the deep shade cast by the trees. . . .

Her son . . . her son was in Egypt, he was aide-de-camp to Bonaparte! It was soon known all over Paris that Mme. Bonaparte had installed a young man in her house and that "he reigned as master there."[1] But everybody knew that this young man was not Eugène de Beauharnais. Now the Parisians love to hear of other people's little faults, especially when those faults belong to members of the fair sex, and still more so when such faults are committed by a woman who, by reason of her husband's high position, is the cynosure of

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 210.

all beholders. So the young man's identity was soon disclosed.

Although Mme. Bonaparte, as we see, had *friends*, she forgot all too often that she also had several enemies. Her husband's relations stood first and foremost among those enemies. Her thoughtless behaviour in Italy had alienated those of his relations who were already inclined to be prejudiced against her. The Bonapartes were not particularly noted for their good morals, except, of course, Mme. Letizia; but this fact did not prevent them blaming Mme. Josephine for the very faults possessed by each member of that illustrious family, faults to which they were so lenient in latter days.

"The Bonapartes could not see this woman hold the honour and the affection of the most brilliant member of their family so lightly without experiencing grief, indignation and jealous hatred. It is true that she sometimes went (as seldom as possible, however) to see her mother-in-law, her brothers and sisters-in-law; but she felt that they did not like her, in fact that the whole family hated her";[1] she, for her part, hardly took the trouble to hide her dislike for them; and so, as long as the link which bound them together, that is to say the general, was absent in Egypt, they saw very little of one another. This fact, however, did not prevent Napoleon's brothers learning of M. Hippolyte Charles' presence at La Malmaison, and it is highly probable that it was they who acquainted him of what was going on there.

M. Gohier, that seemingly good-natured, middle-class president of the *Directoire*, who "in reality was a very

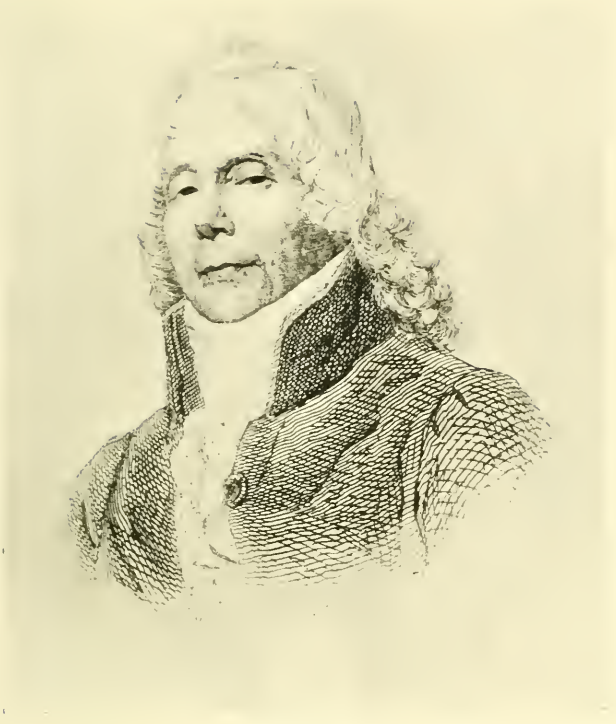
[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 427.

spiteful, malign creature,"[1] also heard of his presence at La Malmaison. He was scandalized by this very improper state of affairs. As Mme. Bonaparte was an intimate friend of his wife, he thought it his duty to give her some good, fatherly advice of which he considered she stood in need; he might just as well have saved himself the trouble—she would alter nothing.

"Well, then! divorce your husband!" said he to her when, with tears streaming down her face, she refused to break off a *liaison* which was compromising her reputation. "Divorce him! You tell me that you and M. Charles are nothing more than friends. But as this friendship is so exclusive that it makes you forget the laws of decency and morality, I feel I must talk to you as if it were really a case of love and urge you to get a divorce; because a friendship which can make you forget everything else, will compensate you for what you will lose by a divorce. But, believe me, you will suffer for all this!"[2]

Get a divorce! It was very easy to say, but Mme. Bonaparte did not think it advisable to do so. She was accustomed to be flattered and to hear all the pleasant little things which people were so fond of saying to the wife of General Bonaparte; although she did not love her husband, she loved this easy life, taking no thought for the morrow, always going to parties and *fêtes*, all of which she owed to her husband's popularity; "she wanted to have all the privileges without fulfilling any of the duties."[3] No, she would not get a divorce! For what would become of her when she was once divorced? Could she marry M. Charles? M. Charles who was plain

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. IV, p. 504.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 210.
[3] Arthur Lévy, *Napoléon intime*, p. 144.



TALLEYRAND

M. Charles and nothing more ? . . . When one has been the vicomtesse de Beauharnais, when one has been Mme. Bonaparte ? M. Charles ? No one would marry a plain *monsieur* after all that ! . . . And then, would M. Charles want to marry her ? For a man often makes a woman his mistress whom he would not dream of marrying, of making her his lawful wife, of making her the mother of his children. No, no, anything except a divorce !

So, as each day brought her nearer to General Bonaparte's return from Egypt, she began to see more and more of M. and Mme. Gohier, in the hope that her great intimacy with this respectable couple would prevent her husband getting suspicious and believing any scandal which spiteful busybodies might happen to tell him.

She hardly ever went up to Paris without going to dine at the Luxemburg. But she did not always dine with the Gohier family ; she was sometimes the guest of Barras.

One day she happened to meet M. de Talleyrand there. Mme. Tallien, it goes without saying, was also present. M. de Talleyrand was seated between the two ladies. He was so attentive to Mme. Tallien and forgot so completely to take any notice of his other neighbour that Mme. Bonaparte felt very vexed ; at last she could stand it no longer, so she left the table and went to cry in the adjoining room. Her vexation and tears were caused by something more than wounded pride ; she saw that something dreadful must have happened for her thus to be slighted by an individual who only cared for people who could be of use to him. For her well-known *liaison* with that jack-in-the-box, M. Charles,

would not have shocked him. No! such a small matter would not have scandalized the erstwhile bishop; and it was not because he had learnt that she took bribes from anybody who was kind enough to offer them to her, neither that she accepted nice little perquisites from tradespeople when they wanted her to help them in their shady transactions. It was said that the ex-prelate did the very same thing. Then why did he treat her so rudely? Was she already a widow? Yes, that must be it. For never would M. de Talleyrand have slighted Napoleon's wife during his lifetime. But then, what would she do if she lost her position in society through her husband's death? For such an idea had never crossed her mind until that minute; and yet her husband was exposed to great dangers in Egypt. Yes, what ought she to do? Where should she find such a generous lover as he had always been? And her tears began to flow all the faster. When a woman loses her husband, isn't it the proper thing for her to cry? And then, it does one such a lot of good to have a good cry from time to time. Ah! perhaps after all she would have to marry M. Charles. He was on the spot. . . . What did she care for what people might say? . . . Barras was out of the question; the place was already occupied, and Mme. Tallien did not seem inclined to give it up, not for some time at least. Besides, M. Charles would do just as well as anybody else; he was not a very brilliant *parti*, it was true; but still, if General Bonaparte was really dead, his demise would save her the trouble of being obliged to face the disagreeable worry of getting a divorce. For M. Gohier seemed determined to make her divorce her husband. . . . Yes, that

was it ; she must marry M. Charles ; that was the only possible solution.

Mme. Bonaparte dried her tears ; then, as nothing happened to confirm her fears, she made up her mind that M. de Talleyrand must have heard that she was in disgrace. So, in order to prevent this painful extremity becoming an accomplished fact, she took the greatest pains to get into her friends' good graces and to have, as we say, plenty of strings to her bow. While waiting to see what happened, she paid more attention than ever to the Gohier family. Gohier had married his cook, but what did that matter to her ? In order to become still better friends, she took it into her head to try and make a match between her daughter and the Gohiers' son. But this marriage did not come off. The Gohiers were rather conceited ; and, as they had not the same reasons to desire this marriage as she had, they turned a deaf ear to her proposal. She then tried to marry Hortense to the son of the *directeur*, Rewbel ; but Hortense would not give her consent.[1]

As for M. de Talleyrand, he had doubtless thought that Josephine's disgrace was certain after her scandalous *liaison* with M. Charles, and that was why he slighted her. Meanwhile, he had begun to fear that she might bear spite ; so, in order to put an end to this disagreeable episode, he did everything which lay in his power, before the dawn of the Empire, to marry his niece, his brother's daughter, to Eugène de Beauharnais ; but the father of the young lady opposed the match and so she married Just de Noailles.

M. de Talleyrand then did his best to get Napoleon

[1] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 147.

to divorce Josephine, so that he might marry princess Wilhelmina of Baden. Napoleon probably told Josephine all about the matter, and Josephine, as we shall see later, revenged herself in a very witty manner upon M. de Talleyrand by making him marry his old mistress, Mme. Grand.

Mme. Bonaparte was dining quietly with the respectable Gohier family on the evening of the 18th *brumaire, an* VII, when the president of the *Directoire* received a very important piece of news: General Bonaparte had landed at Fréjus on the previous day! Mme. Bonaparte, according to a witness, M. Brunetière, "was not so pleased to hear of his return as she ought to have been."[1] This news was more productive of astonishment than joy to her as well as to Gohier.[2]

"President," said she to him, "fear not that Bonaparte is coming with any intentions of taking Liberty captive. But you must all assemble so as to prevent any unprincipled persons taking matters into their own hands. I am now going to meet him; it is important for me that I should not be accused of anything wrong by his brothers, who have always hated me. However," she added, looking at Mme. Gohier, "I have nothing to fear from calumny; when Bonaparte learns that you are my best and dearest friends, he will be both flattered and grateful to you for your kindness to me during his absence."[3]

Mme. Bonaparte, in speaking thus, was trying to put a brave face on the matter, as the saying goes; but things turned out "contrary to her expectations, for

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 97.
[2] Gohier, *Mémoires*, Vol I, p. 198.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p 199.

Bonaparte was anything but flattered."[1] But were not these strange thoughts to be aroused in Mme. Bonaparte's breast by the unexpected arrival of the glorious young husband who loved her with all his heart and who had just been exposed to countless dangers? Strange, indeed, to say the very least of it.

Mme. Bonaparte must have been perfectly well aware that her brothers-in-law had informed her husband of the scandalous reports concerning herself and her behaviour which she knew were circulated in Paris. In fact, she was the talk of the town. The old marquis d'Hautefort, on hearing that the general had landed at Fréjus, said to Mme. Permon in speaking of her:

"She'll soon clap on the mask she wore on her wedding-day when she sees him again. But let her beware! he's a cunning dog who sees pretty straight at times, whereas she's only a little fool!"[2] And yet it is usually the husband who is supposed to be the fool on such occasions. How inconsequent is French society!

General Bonaparte had indeed been informed while in Egypt of his wife's new escapade. The recollection of her unprincipled conduct in Italy made him dread to hear of fresh follies in Paris. Would she know, when she found herself there, free to follow her own devices and to indulge her extravagant tastes with nobody to guide and advise her—would she know how to behave as the wife of a husband who is at the wars and eight hundred leagues away from her, ought to do? He doubted it. So it was probably at his request that Junot, in February, 1799, while on the banks of the Messoudiah, near El-

[1] Arthur Lévy, *Napoléon intime*, p. 144.
[2] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 97.

Arych, made the famous revelations which Bourrienne describes in his memoirs. " I saw Bonaparte," says he, " walking alone with Junot, as was his custom to do. I was not very far away from them, and I know not what made me watch him during this conversation. The general's face, which was always pale, for some unknown reason suddenly became still paler. The muscles of his face seemed to contract ; his eyes became fixed and he struck his forehead several times. After conversing for about a quarter of an hour, he left Junot and returned to me. I had never seen him look so angry, or so preoccupied. I advanced to meet him ; as soon as we were together, he said in a harsh, brusque tone : ' You are not my friend. Oh ! women ! women ! . . . Josephine ! . . . If you were really my friend, you would have told me all I have just learnt from Junot ; he is a true friend. . . . Josephine ! . . . And we are parted by six hundred leagues ! You ought to have told me ! . . . Josephine ! to think that she should deceive me so ! . . . She ! . . . Woe betide them ! . . . I will exterminate that breed of effeminate puppies and coxcombs ! . . . As for her, I will divorce her, I will divorce her. . . . Yes, a divorce. . . . And everybody shall hear of it. . . . I must write. . . . I know everything now. . . . It is your fault, you ought to have told me ! "[1]

It was certainly not Bourrienne's fault ; anybody else, under the circumstances, would have done the same and said nothing. He had guessed the subject of Bonaparte's recent conversation with Junot. As he had never received anything but kind treatment at the hands of Mme. Bonaparte, he, as the general's secretary and friend,

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, pp. 211-14.

could only endeavour to pacify his master, persuade him to believe that the report which he had just heard was only idle gossip, and that he ought not to demean himself by listening to slander invented by jealous, spiteful people ; and then he reminded him of his future, for he was still so young ! He spoke to him of his fame ! . . .

" My fame ? " cried he ; " ah ! what would I not give to learn that what Junot has just told me was not true, so dearly do I love that woman ! . . . If Josephine is guilty, a divorce shall separate us for ever ! . . . I won't be the laughing-stock of all the lazy, good-for-nothing devils in Paris ! I will write to Joseph, he shall get us divorced ! "[1]

And Bonaparte wrote to his brother as he had promised to do, but he did not commission him to get a divorce. He contented himself by giving way to his grief and anger in a long letter ; this missive shows us the state of his mind and feelings at that time. Here it is : it is dated from Cairo, July 25th, 1799 :

" You will read the result of the battles and the conquest of Egypt in the newspapers ; this conquest was sufficiently difficult to enable me to add another laurel-branch to the already formidable sheaf of trophies won by this army. . . . I have many domestic worries. . . ."

These dots inserted in place of a sentence were interpreted by that " abominable pamphleteer," Lewis Goldsmith,[2] as follows : " for the veil has fallen from my eyes." And M. Arthur Lévy says : " As this letter is quoted verbatim, without any other alteration than the

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, pp. 211-14.

[2] Lewis Goldsmith, *Histoire secrète du cabinet de Napoléon Bonaparte*, Vol. I, p. 174 ; London, 1814.

reinsertion of the words purposely omitted by Joseph, we are constrained to consider this interpretation authentic."[1]

The letter continues as follows :

" Your affection is very dear to me : were I to lose it, and were you to deceive me, I should become a perfect misanthrope. It is a sad thing when one both loves and hates a person.

" See to it that I find a country-house ready to receive me either near Paris or in Burgundy on my arrival in France ; I mean to pass the winter in the country and to live the life of a hermit : I am sick of my fellow-creatures. I am in need of solitude and isolation ; earthly splendours weary me. My heart is worn out with suffering. Glory is but a poor thing at twenty-nine years of age. I have drained the cup of human bliss ; I now only have to become a thoroughly selfish creature. I mean to keep my house to myself ; I will share it with nobody. I no longer have anybody to live for. Adieu, my only friend ; I have never been unjust towards you."[2]

At last this storm, like many another, blew over, at least for a time. But it had torn from poor Napoleon's heart the last illusions which he might have had or which he might have wished to keep, and it had quenched the last remaining sparks of the love which he had never ceased to bear towards his Josephine. But he was so kind hearted, no matter what people have said to the contrary, that he still cared for her whom he had once worshipped. And, as always happens in such cases, after having drawn Junot out and listened to his disclosures, Bona-

[1] Arthur Lévy, *Napoléon intime*, p. 100.
[2] Joseph Bonaparte, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 189.

parte began to hate his informant ; in fact, he never forgave him. It was partly on account of these indiscreet disclosures, which the duchesse d'Abrantès denies were ever made,[1] that Junot owed the fact that he did not receive the *bâton* of Marshal of France during the Empire. Napoleon, who told his wife everything when he made friends with her, did not hide from her what Junot had told him ; so Josephine, who had not forgotten the journey from Paris to Milan, as we can easily imagine, never again cared very much for him.

But Bonaparte's love for his wife had been torn for ever from his breast, and his *liaison* with Mme. Fourès, the wife of an officer of light horse, dated from his return to France from Saint-Jean-d'Acre ; this *liaison* helped him to forget his sorrows for a time.

His young aide-de-camp, Eugène de Beauharnais, was placed in a very disagreeable and even painful position by the disclosures made to Bonaparte concerning his mother's bad conduct in Paris. " About this time," we read in his memoirs, " the general began to be assailed by various troubles, caused either by the discontent which reigned among a certain portion of the army and especially among the superior officers, or either by unsatisfactory news received from France with which people tried to disturb his domestic happiness.

" Although I was still very young, he trusted me so thoroughly that he told me all his troubles. It was usually at night, while striding to and fro in his tent, that he confided all his anxieties and cares to my ear. I was the only person to whom he could open his heart without restraint. I tried to pacify him ; I consoled

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 64.

him as well as I could and as well as my youth and my respect for him would allow me to do."[1]

But poor Eugène himself was very unhappy and uneasy in his mind; and although he was not in a position to sit in judgment over his mother, although he had no right to inquire whether his mother had been unfaithful to her husband or not, for his duty as a son was to ignore such things, he could not, however, prevent himself feeling uneasy and he dreaded lest anyone should mention this delicate subject in his presence. So when General Bonaparte, on the point of leaving Egypt, took him with him, saying: "Eugène, you are going to see your mother again!" he confessed he was not as pleased to hear these words as he ought to have been. He feared for his mother, for his stepfather of whom he was really fond, for their mutual peace and happiness, lest the first interview should occasion a storm. But the young man's position became still more painful when he saw his stepfather take no precautions to hide his *liaison* with her whom the soldiers called: "Our Sovereign of the East," and drive out with her every evening in an open carriage.

"The pleasant relations existing between my father and I," says he a little further on in his memoirs, "nearly came to a sudden end owing to an event which I am now going to relate. General Bonaparte paid great attention to the wife of an officer and sometimes drove out with her in an open carriage. This woman was witty and of pleasing appearance. People immediately began to say that she was his mistress; so that my position, both as aide-de-camp and as son of the general's wife, became rather painful.

[1] Prince Eugène, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 42.

"As my duties obliged me to accompany the general, who never went out without an aide-de-camp in attendance, I had already been forced to ride two or three times behind this carriage when, unable to bear this humiliation any longer, I went to see General Berthier in order to ask him to get me drafted into some other regiment. A rather angry scene took place between my stepfather and myself in consequence of my request; but he never again went out driving with the lady in question."[1]

[1] Prince Eugène, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 46.

CHAPTER VI

Josephine is alarmed on hearing that her husband has landed—She decides to go and meet him—Bonaparte returns to Paris by the Bourbonnais route, while Josephine chooses the Lyons route—Grief and anger of the general—He refuses to see Josephine when she returns to Paris from Lyons—Affecting scenes—A stroke of genius—Bonaparte capitulates—Reconciliation—Disappointment of the Bonaparte family—Josephine tries to win the family over to her side—Her plans for Hortense—Josephine's talents as a hostess—She helps the general to prepare his *coup d'Etat*—Bonaparte gives a *soirée*—M. and Mme. Gohier—The 18th *brumaire*—Aversion of Mme. Bonaparte *mère* for Josephine.

SO General Bonaparte started for Paris. As he was in a hurry to reach the capital, it was highly probable that he would not stop anywhere on the road, and so he might be expected to arrive any day. All France was intoxicated with delight at his return ; as he advanced nearer Paris, he was received with such enthusiasm as had never been witnessed before or since. People were even seen to drop down dead with joy, among others the deputy Baudin, father of the famous admiral of that name. Josephine did not share in this enthusiasm ; she was more ready to die of terror than of joy, and she asked herself in fear and trembling : " How will he receive me ? " For she could not hide from herself the fact that her brothers-in-law, who hated her, must have been delighted to be able to denounce her ; for they must have surely mentioned her *liaison* with M. Charles in their letters, which *liaison* she could not flatter herself

they were in ignorance of, for all Paris knew of it. It was therefore of the greatest importance to her that she should see her husband before the Bonapartes could get at him: we can easily guess her reasons for wishing to do so. On the other hand, the Bonaparte family thought it absolutely necessary for one of their number to see the general before his wife could see him, and so Louis was despatched to go and meet him.

So while all General Bonaparte's nearest and dearest were bustling about and wondering what they ought to do, not so much because they loved him as because each one wanted to look after his own interests, he was driving towards Paris. The nearer he got to the end of his journey, the more clearly he remembered Junot's revelations at Messoudiah, and bitter and irritating suspicions assailed his mind. "How will she dare to look me in the face?" he asked himself.

The news of the general's landing had reached Paris by telegraph[1] on the evening of the 18th *vendémiaire*. Mme. Bonaparte started early on the morning of the 19th to meet her husband. But there are two routes from Paris to Lyons. By which of those two roads would he arrive? No one knew. As she remembered that he was very fond of Burgundy, Mme. Bonaparte chose the route through Burgundy, in the hope that he would take that route to Paris and thus they would meet on the road. Louis Bonaparte, who was also going to meet the general and who had chosen the same route, had started much earlier and had already left her far behind him.

[1] Aerial telegraphy was invented in 1790 by Claude Chappe (1763–1806).

" But at Lyons," says Eugène in his memoirs, " Bonaparte took leave of his travelling-companions and set off in a light carriage in order to reach Paris as soon as possible. By an unlucky mischance, my mother who, at the first news of our landing, had started to meet him at Lyons, took the route through Burgundy, while he travelled through the Bourbonnais. In this way we reached Paris forty-eight hours before her ; so that the field was clear for my mother's enemies, who gladly availed themselves of this opportunity to poison her husband's mind against her."[1]

But how shall we describe Mme. Bonaparte's grief and disappointment on learning that her husband had taken another route and that she would not see him until she returned to Paris ? What despair she was in ! His family would be sure to gather round him as soon as he arrived, and she, his wife, she alone would not be there to welcome him ! And then what would he think of her ? On hearing the accusations of his brothers and sister, who would be able to wag their spiteful tongues with all the more effect because she would not be there to contradict the falsehoods with which she knew they would try to account for her absence, he would probably think to himself that she dared not face his grief and anger and his reproachful looks, and that the accusations were well founded. Oh ! the Bonapartes would have plenty of time to blacken her character ! And would not this absence look like a tacit but unmistakable avowal of her fault ? She had fled ! . . . Oh ! how the unfortunate creature must have regretted her past bad conduct ! And how, in these hours of torture, M. Gohier's words

[1] Prince Eugène, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 75.

must have burned into her brain as if written in letters of fire: "Get a divorce! get a divorce!"

It is certain that the Bonapartes intended to do their very best to persuade the general to divorce her. The fact that his wife had borne him no children would not have been sufficient excuse, although at that time people were divorced for much less;[1] but her notorious misconduct was more than sufficient excuse, and it was with ill-disguised joy that they all tasted in anticipation this much-desired, long-expected revenge upon the woman whom they detested. Perhaps they enjoyed this thought, so strong was their hatred of her, more than the thought that they would soon see their brother rid of his unworthy wife.

Meanwhile, at six o'clock on the morning of October 16th, General Bonaparte alighted from his carriage in front of his little *hôtel* in the rue de la Victoire. He expected to fall into his wife's arms. His mother was there, his brothers, with the exception of Lucien and Louis, were also there; his sisters were there, the whole family crowded round him . . . his wife alone was absent.

"Is she ill?" cried he, growing suddenly anxious. He was reassured by an affected, cynical smile which cut poor Eugène to the heart, poor Eugène whose position was becoming very painful, even more painful than it had been in Egypt; for he was beginning to ask himself whether he really had cause to blush for his mother's conduct and that before the whole Bonaparte family, of whose treatment he himself had no cause to complain, but who, he knew, detested her.

[1] "People go before the mayor and get married just for a joke, and a week later they are divorced! . . ." (*Journal du temps*).

On the morrow the *Moniteur*, after announcing General Bonaparte's arrival in Paris, said: "The *Directoire* has just informed the *citoyenne* Bonaparte, who had already started with Joseph and Lucien Bonaparte in order to meet the illustrious traveller and bring him back to Paris, that he has reached the capital."[1]

Josephine's absence "made a deep and painful impression upon her husband. He thought that, as he had not found her among the members of his family, supported by his sisters, presented by his mother, she had realized that she was unworthy of their protection and that she had fled from the presence of the man whom she had offended."[2] So she has run away with that fellow Charles! thought the unfortunate husband to himself. . . . He never forgot that hour of torture. Had Josephine appeared upon the scene just at that moment, it is probable that he, in his anger, would have sent her packing—which she richly deserved; he would have asked for a divorce and all would have been over between this pair who had spent so few days together since their marriage that they could have counted them upon their fingers.

The general tried to dissemble his anger, but it was terrible to behold. "'Henceforth I and she have nothing in common,' said he to Collot, who had come to see him.

"'What! do you want to leave her?'

"'Does she not deserve it?'

"'I don't know about that; but is this the proper time to think about such matters? Think of France!

[1] Th. Jung, *Mémoires de Lucien*, Vol. I, p. 261.
[2] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 103.

The eye of the nation is fixed upon you. France expects you to devote your life to her well-being; if she sees that you allow yourself to be worried by domestic quarrels, your glory will fade, she will look upon you as one of those luckless husbands whom Molière was so fond of holding up to ridicule in his plays. Leave her and her faults alone! If you are not pleased with her conduct, you can repudiate her when you have nothing better to do; but, first of all, you must begin by restoring the State to its proper position. After having done that, you will be able to find a hundred reasons to justify your resentment; France would be the first to blame you if you did anything now, and you know us far too well not to realize how necessary it is for you not to begin by making a fool of yourself."

"Bonaparte let M. Collot ramble on; the latter fondly thought he had made some impression, when the general suddenly exclaimed:

"'No! I have quite made up my mind; she shall not set foot in my house any more. What do I care for what people will say? They will cackle for a day or two, and then on the third day they will forget all about it. The future is so big with events, what effect will our separation have? It will have no effect whatever upon me. My wife shall go to La Malmaison. I shall stay here. The public knows quite enough about the matter not to be mistaken as to my reasons for sending her away.'

"M. Collot vainly tried to pacify him; Bonaparte gave vent to his anger in reproaches and imprecations.

"'Such violence,' said M. Collot to him, 'proves to me that you are still very much in love with her. When she

appears and begs to be forgiven, you will forgive her and you will feel happier.'

"'I forgive her? Never! . . . You know me well. . . . If I were not sure of my own feelings, I would tear my heart out and I would throw it into the fire.' In uttering these words, Bonaparte seemed nearly choking with rage; he clutched at his breast as if he wanted to tear it open."[1]

Collot departed; but before he left the room, Bonaparte invited him to breakfast on the morrow.

Meanwhile Mme. Bonaparte returned. Her husband neither wished to see her nor to speak to her; and in fact he did not see her. His anger, instead of growing calmer, only increased.

"She wants to defy me, now; she has thought better of her conduct, and she is laughing at me. I was too kind to her in Italy. But now never, never again will I take her back."

And he shut himself up in his study and began to pace up and down the room in his agitation.

Mme. Bonaparte, with dishevelled hair and streaming eyes, went and knocked at his door.

"Open, my friend, my kind friend! I will explain everything." Her voice was broken by deep sobs.

"Oh! he won't open the door! . . . Why are you so angry with me, my friend? . . . Ah! if you only knew how you pain me!"

She used the most endearing, the most passionate terms of affection; her sobs were enough to soften the hardest heart. But Bonaparte was unmoved; he paid no attention to her prayers. And now, though despair

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. IV, p 146–8.

took the place of prayers and supplications, it had no effect upon the heart with which she had trifled hitherto with such impunity. She passed a terrible night: in her despair, she grovelled on the floor, struck her forehead against the fast-closed door behind which stood a man, her husband, whose love she had despised, whose honour she had dragged in the mud while he was away exposed to countless dangers, whom she would have covered with ridicule if such a genius could have been made ridiculous by the sayings and doings of such a silly, insignificant creature as she was! . . . And now she lay there, with dishevelled locks, only half-clothed, overwhelmed with despair, the picture of grief, begging pardon of him whom she had wounded so cruelly. Providence sometimes sees fit to punish in this world those who have despised the holy laws of duty; in those long, apparently unending hours, Mme. Bonaparte expiated many cruel and unkind deeds. But now, as if she thought that she had suffered quite long enough, an idea occurred to this brain which hitherto had seemed incapable of thinking of anything serious. Her waiting-woman having told her to send her children to the general:

"Yes," said she, "Bonaparte is soft-hearted. That is the way to manage him: I've got him."

Mme. Bonaparte immediately saw what an excellent plan this was. It was evident that the general knew all about her misconduct: he could no longer love the woman who had shown him so clearly that she did not love him. Besides this, she had trifled too much with his honour for her to dare to appeal to his affection. But she still possessed one weapon, and a very powerful

weapon, and she intended Bonaparte to receive the first blow which she knew his sense of honour would forbid him to return ; she still had her children and she could still make use of their tears and their prayers.

Bonaparte, who had remarked the young Eugène's bravery and affectionate disposition, loved him ; he was also fond of Hortense, who, although so young, promised to be a good and a clever woman. Well ! could he who loved and cared for these young people as if they were his own children—could he find it in his heart to say to them : " Go with your mother ! I don't want to have anything more to do with her ; she has deceived me cruelly ; she does not even deserve to be hated : she only deserves to be despised." Could he say that ? No, never would Bonaparte tell those weeping children that their mother was a despicable creature, that she was unworthy of their love and respect.

Mme. Bonaparte hurried off to fetch her son and daughter. No one slept in the *hôtel* in the rue de la Victoire that night. She briefly told them what she wanted them to do, what they *must* do, and then she sent them to her husband.

She had guessed aright. " How could he tell young people of the age of Hortense and Eugène that their mother had been guilty of misconduct ? Bonaparte was obliged to hold his peace ; all his anger melted away at the sight of these poor young, innocent creatures who knelt at his feet, covered his hands with their tears and cried over and over again : ' Don't desert our mother —it would kill her ! And then what should we poor orphans, whose natural protector has already been devoured by the guillotine, what should we do if Injustice

deprived us of him whom Providence sent to befriend us ? ' '[1]

He who had vanquished Austria and Turkey was vanquished in his turn by these defenceless young creatures. And yet Lamartine dared to say of him :

" Nothing human ever beat beneath that thick armour."

" Very well," said he, " go and fetch your mother."

The poor young things ran and found her lying bent double with grief on the stairs leading to the servants' quarters ; she was overwhelmed . . . her despair was genuine.

" Mama, come ! " said they ; " the general is waiting for you."

She ran and fell into his arms without being able to utter a single word ; her tears were choking her. . . . And then she fainted.

Bonaparte picked her up in his arms and laid her on the bed. . . .

And when Lucien came to see his brother on the following morning, he found him lying by her side.

The couple had made friends. But Bonaparte had exacted a promise. Poor general ! he had " asked her to send away M. Charles, and to promise that she would never see him again."[2]

Josephine had granted his request. What did she care for her lover now ? She sacrificed him as easily as she had once sacrificed her husband's honour. Oh ! the inconsistency and thoughtlessness of women !

Bonaparte introduced to his wife a mameluke named

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 104.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 210.

Ali whom he had brought back from Egypt to be her servant. Ali was very ugly and as cross as he was ugly. He alterwards became so unbearable and so unpopular that he had to be sent to Fontainebleau, where he was employed to polish the floors.

Collot came at ten o'clock in the morning to breakfast with the general. On his arrival, he was informed that Mme. Bonaparte had returned home and had been forgiven. Bonaparte seemed rather uneasy.

" Well," said he to M. Collot as soon as they were alone, " well, she's here."

" So much the better ; you have done yourself and us a very good turn ! "

" Now, don't go and think I've forgiven her ! . . . Never will I do that ! . . . I never saw anything like it in my whole life. She told me everything. . . . At first I refused to listen to her. . . . And there was that great booby Joseph listening all the time ! . . . But what can you expect, Collot ? As she was going downstairs crying, I saw Eugène and Hortense following her, sobbing. God did not give me a heart to let me see tears shed without feeling moved myself. . . . Eugène was with me in Egypt. I have grown accustomed to consider him as my adopted son ; he is so plucky and he is such a steady young fellow ! Hortense will soon be going into society : everybody who knows her speaks well of her. . . . I must confess, Collot, I was deeply moved ; I could not withstand the sobs of those two poor children. I said to myself : ' Ought they to suffer for their mother's faults ? ' . . . I kept Eugène with me ; Hortense accompanied her mother. I said nothing. . . . What would you have me do under the circumstances ? Men are often weak."

" Be assured that they will reward you."

" They ought to do so, Collot, they ought to do so, for it cost me something to forgive her."[1]

Josephine did not reward this act of abnegation as much as it deserved to be rewarded ; as for Bonaparte, he did not reward Junot for having made certain disclosures on the banks of the Massoudiah ; he forgave his wife for her misconduct, but he did not forgive Junot for having informed him of it ; neither did he forgive Collot for having seen him in a moment of weakness. As for Bourrienne, he declares that this conversation led to Bonaparte's dislike for M. Collot, for " the general never liked people who happened to know too much about certain family skeletons which he of late years had endeavoured to keep out of sight under lock and key."[2]

Mme. Bonaparte was beginning to recover from the shock which she had lately experienced. It had been a terrible blow to her. She had been on the very brink of a divorce from the husband who had once loved her so dearly, she, who had trifled with that love as if it were untiring or inexhaustible. Did she not still act just as thoughtlessly as ever ? And did she not squander her money just as foolishly as she had once squandered her husband's love ?

And now she began to settle down to the calm, peaceful existence with her husband which he loved above everything else. He had forgiven, he seemed to have forgotten, everything. But the Bonaparte family did not look at matters in the same light and could not share

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. IV, p. 119.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 20.

the general's feelings; they forgot nothing and took good care to let people know it. "The one member of the family who could not bear to sit still and see Bonaparte forgive was Mme. Leclerc. She worked herself up into a perfect passion. Mme. Bonaparte *mère* was not one whit less annoyed, but at least she said nothing. Mme. Joseph Bonaparte, always kind and sweet-tempered, never interfered with anybody or anything. But Mme. Leclerc really enjoyed being able to show her spite when the pendulum once more swept round in favour of Mme. Bonaparte. Mme. Baciocchi made no secret about her feelings and let her sister-in-law see how she hated and despised her. And so her brother's wife naturally could not endure her. Christine, Lucien's wife, an angel of goodness, followed Mme. Joseph's example. As for Caroline, she was too young for her opinion to count for much. As for the brothers, they had declared war against Mme. Bonaparte and they did not mind people knowing it. Jérôme, himself, although he was still almost a child—he was hardly fifteen years of age—wanted to join in the family feud and raved at his sister-in-law until he made himself hoarse."[1] And then he had his own reasons for doing so. Although the members of the Bonaparte family did not really care for Eugène, they were always praising this young man up to the skies and telling Jérôme that he ought to try and imitate him.[2]

The long and terrible scene which had preceded Josephine's reconciliation with the warrior who had just returned from Egypt was a good lesson to her. She now

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 107.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

JOSEPH EMMANUEL SIEYES,

Duplessi-Bertaux, del. *Levachet, sculpt.*

became much more staid—at least, she appeared to be so. She had dried her tears, and the couple were now to enjoy an almost uninterrupted era of domestic peace. "When once the first quarrels of married life were over," says Thibaudeau, "they got on very well together."[1]

She, in the graceful, charming manner which was natural to her, endeavoured to further her husband's interests in every way possible; she devoted herself to him. Although Bonaparte owed much to his brother Lucien for the help he gave him on the 18th *brumaire*, he also owed a certain amount of gratitude to his wife for the address and intelligence with which she aided him during the preliminaries of that *coup d'Etat*.

Women are better hands at intrigue and duplicity than men; as for Josephine, she was quite in her element and frisked about as lively as an adder in a quick-set hedge. A few days after the reconciliation, the general and Mme. Bonaparte were dining with the president of the *Directoire;* it was quite a small, informal party, but there were, however, a few members of the Institute whom Bonaparte had asked Gohier to invite, including Sieyès, who also belonged to the Institute, but whom the general could very well have done without.

"What have you done?" cried Mme. Bonaparte to Gohier when she caught sight of Sieyès standing in the *salon*. "Sieyès is the one statesman whom Bonaparte cannot endure: *he is his pet aversion*."

In short, Bonaparte would not open his mouth to Sieyès, and even pretended not to see him. Sieyès, on rising from the table, bolted out of the room in a fury.

"Did you notice," said he to Gohier, "that insolent

[1] Thibaudeau, *Consulat*, Vol. I, p. 19.

little creature's behaviour towards me, a member of that body which would have done well to have had him shot ? "[1]

Bonaparte's political plans did not prevent him forming other plans, also political, but of a more private nature.

We have seen how strained matters were between Mme. Bonaparte and her husband's family ; she wished them to become better friends with her ; she even hoped to be able to win one of their number over to her side. This was very necessary but terribly difficult to accomplish. At last she hit upon a plan to marry her daughter Hortense to the young Jérôme Bonaparte ; she had noticed that they seemed inclined to get on well together. She had watched Jérôme playing with Hortense and chasing his pretty half-sister, as he called her when he was in a good temper, round the tiny garden belonging to the *hôtel*. So she thought that it would be quite a stroke of genius if she could betroth these two children. This plan would put an end to all animosity and prejudice, and so peace would be established between the two families. For was not this present state of armed peace quite intolerable ? As for the marriage, that could be celebrated later on, when Jérôme was old enough to marry. It appears that this was the advice of Bourrienne, " her spiritual and temporal director," as the duchesse d'Abrantès calls him. It was certainly good advice, but the time for which Mme. Bonaparte longed so ardently had not come yet. Lucien, who, as the much-esteemed and influential deputy of the *Conseil des Cinq-Cents*, was the director, the *tintinajo*[2] of his family, as they say in

[1] Gohier, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, pp. 202–3.

[2] A *tintinajo* in Corsica is a ram with a little bell hung round its neck, which is followed everywhere by the whole flock of sheep.

Corsica, had not yet consented to make friends and so matters could go no farther for the present. This plan was taken up again, however, with renewed vigour; but then it was first for Lucien's benefit, and afterwards for Louis', that Mme. Bonaparte made her plans; and it was Louis who allowed himself to be captivated by the golden tresses and violet eyes of the fascinating Hortense.

Meanwhile, the time was approaching when Bonaparte thought it necessary to hurry up political matters. His wife continued to help him in every way, and we must confess that she did her part of the bargain to perfection. We can see her enthroned in her *salon*, receiving the conspirators and those whom she had been commissioned to win over to her husband's side. She had a kind word for each and all, and she managed to make her guests affable towards one another and thus do away with the coolness which always reigns among those men who hold high positions and very opposite opinions, and who are obliged to keep watch over themselves and one another. The poet Arnault, who was one of the *habitués* of Josephine's *salon*, will now lift a corner of one of the curtains of that *salon* and show us what is going on there. The room is full. "Josephine does the honours of her *salon* more gracefully than ever. We meet men holding all sorts of opinions, generals, deputies, royalists, Jacobins, *abbés*, a Minister and even the president of the *Directoire*. To see the air of superiority of the master of the house, one would think that he was already a monarch surrounded by his court. Here comes the Minister Fouché; he takes a seat on the sofa beside Mme. Bonaparte.

"*Gohier:* 'Anything new, *citoyen* Minister?'

"*Fouché:* 'New? Nothing, indeed.'

"*Gohier:* 'Well?'

"*Fouché:* 'Always the same tittle-tattle?'

"*Gohier:* 'What do you mean?'

"*Fouché:* 'They can talk of nothing but the conspiracy.'

"*Gohier* (shrugging his shoulders): 'What conspiracy?'

"*Fouché:* 'Why, *the* conspiracy. But I'm not so easily taken in as all that! I can see pretty straight, *citoyen* director. Trust in me; they won't catch me napping. If a conspiracy really existed—since they will talk of such things—should we not see signs of it on the place de la Révolution or on the plaine de Grenelle?'

"So saying, Fouché bursts out laughing.

"*Mme. Bonaparte:* 'Fie, for shame, *citoyen* Fouché! How can you laugh at such things?'

"*Gohier:* 'The Minister knows what he's talking about. Don't be alarmed, *citoyenne;* if he thought that such a conspiracy really existed, he would be the last person to talk about it in the presence of ladies. Do as the government does: don't let these rumours worry you. Sleep calmly!'

"Bonaparte listens with a smile on his face"[1]—the *coup d'Etat* was to have taken place on the morrow! . . . But it was put off for different reasons until the 18th. The general, in his desire to prevent the simple-minded president of the *Directoire* having the slightest suspicion of what was going to happen, invited himself to dinner with M. Gohier and his family on the 18th.

"I was perfectly well aware that Bonaparte was

[1] Arnault, *Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire.*

ambitious," Gohier said later; "I had received proofs of that fact, but how could I suspect him of such base treachery?"[1]

"Meanwhile," continues Gohier, "Mme. Bonaparte sent her son, Eugène de Beauharnais, at midnight, on the 17th *brumaire*, with the following letter:

"'To the *citoyen* Gohier, president of the *Directoire* of the French Republic:

"'Come with your wife, my dear Gohier, and breakfast with me to-morrow at eight o'clock in the morning. Be sure to come. I want to talk to you about some very interesting matters.

"'Adieu, my dear Gohier; I remain your very sincere friend, 'LAPAGERIE BONAPARTE.

"I thought the hour chosen by the good Josephine rather a strange one to choose. I said to my wife: 'You shall go to the breakfast, and you must tell Mme. Bonaparte that I cannot accept her invitation, but that I shall have the honour to wait upon her during the morning.'

"When Bonaparte saw my wife arrive alone, he frowned.

"'What!' said he, 'isn't the president coming?'

"'No, general, he can't possibly come.'

"'But he must come,' replied Bonaparte. 'Write to him, Madame, and I will send your letter to him.'

"'I will write to him, and one of my servants shall take my letter.'

"My wife seized a pen and wrote these words:

"'You did quite right in not coming, my dear friend;

[1] Gohier, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 234.

everything here shows me that the invitation was only a trap to catch the unwary. I shall soon be with you. . . .'

"No sooner had my wife sent this letter, than Mme. Bonaparte came up to her. 'What you see here, madame,' said she to her, 'must show you that something is bound to happen. I cannot tell you how grieved I am that Gohier has not accepted the invitation which Bonaparte asked me to send, because he wished the president of the *Directoire* to belong to the new government which he proposes to establish. I thought that, by sending my letter by the hand of my son, he would understand that I considered it a matter of great importance.'

"'I will go and fetch him,' replied my wife. 'My presence is not required here.'

"'I will not detain you,' continued Mme. Bonaparte. 'When you see your husband, tell him to reflect well, and do you yourself reflect upon the wish which I have been authorized to impart to you. It is not only his interest which is at stake, but the interests of those who are still dearer to him, and any opposition on his part might spell ruin to those dear ones. The influence of Sieyès and his gang in certain events which are now about to take place will depend upon the president's conduct. Use all your influence to get him to come, I beg of you, Madame!'

"'Mme. Bonaparte knows me well enough and knows my husband well enough to know that he will never allow himself to be influenced in political matters by my advice.'

"'Let me also warn you,' added Mme. Bonaparte, 'that Talleyrand and Bruix are at this moment with Barras, whom they are going to ask to resign, which he

will probably agree to do. Besides this, they are authorized to inform him that Bonaparte is quite determined to employ every means, even force, if he dares to offer the slightest resistance.' "[1]

It is necessary to quote this entire passage from Gohier's memoirs in order to see with what enthusiasm Mme. Bonaparte had set to work to further her husband's plans. Never had she been in such good spirits, never had she been so shrewd, and never had she made such long speeches and argued so cleverly. The general, after his return from Italy and before his departure for Egypt, had forbidden her to discuss politics, " because she knew nothing at all about such matters."

It would seem, if we think of her hard at work preparing the ground for the 18th and 19th *brumaire*, as if she were not so very useless as her husband wished to think. It is true that her activity was only a flash in the pan, a sudden blaze, that she enjoyed doing all this because it was new to her, and also, perhaps, on account of the great interests which she believed were at stake in this game where the general had placed his all on one card; but her industry did not last. When once her husband had really become master of France, she recommenced her life of gaiety, with its accompaniment of parties, *fêtes* and those thousand and one trifles which were all in all to her and for which she was most suited.

After having vainly tried to persuade Gohier to come to her house, so that she might keep him prisoner there and prevent him putting obstacles in the way of the general's *coup d'Etat*, Mme. Bonaparte wished to make one more effort. The general had just gone away after

[1] Gohier, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 234–6

saying: "Has Gohier not come? So much the worse for him!" Left alone with Bourrienne, she confided to him how dreadfully anxious she was. Bourrienne calmed her by telling her that everything had been so carefully prepared that success was certain.

"Do you know Gohier personally?" said she to him. On hearing his reply in the negative, she added:

"I am sorry; I should have requested you to write to him begging him not to make a noise but to imitate Sieyès and Roger-Ducos, who are about to resign of their own accord, and also to keep free of Barras, who is probably giving in his resignation at this very moment, much against his will. Bonaparte told me he would then do anything for Gohier. But I am going to try something else."[1]

She then begged Mme. d'Houchin, one of Mme. Gohier's friends, to tell the latter how sorry she should be to see M. Gohier fall a victim to a revolution which, if he would not oppose it, might be the means of getting him appointed to as brilliant a post as he could wish for; he was even offered a position in the magistracy.[2] M. and Mme. Gohier agreed to refuse the general and Mme. Bonaparte's offers.

Two years later they were not so particular, and Gohier, without a scruple, accepted from the tyrant the post of consul-general in Holland.

Notwithstanding her hopes, Mme. Bonaparte could not help feeling terribly anxious at times. At last, on the 19th *brumaire*, at four o'clock in the morning, Bonaparte, accompanied by Bourrienne, returned to his *hôtel*. Mme.

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 72.
[2] Gohier, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 262.

Bonaparte was reassured. The day's events were reviewed and criticized. Josephine, who was very fond of the Gohier family, repeated that *Directeur's* name several times.

" What can you expect, my dear friend ? " said Bonaparte to her. " It is not my fault. Why did he not join us ? He is a good fellow, but rather silly. He does not understand me. Perhaps I ought to have him deported. He wrote a letter against me to the *Conseil des Cinq-Cents,* but I got hold of his letter and so the *Conseil* knew nothing about the matter. . . . Poor fellow ! . . . He expected me to dinner yesterday ! . . . And that's the sort of fellow who thinks he is fit to be a statesman ! Don't let us say anything more about him ! "[1]

The success of the *coup d'Etat* of the 18th and 19th *brumaire* had made Bonaparte forget all about his wife's misconduct ; but his family could not forget so easily. Although Mme. Letizia treated the daughter-in-law who had made her son so unhappy with a certain amount of cordiality, she could not forgive her her misconduct. In the midst of the events of the 18th and 19th *brumaire,* events which meant life or death to three of her sons, she longed to hear what was happening at Saint-Cloud ; she would not go to the *hôtel* in the rue de la Victoire to ask news. And when Mme. Permon, who had been friends with Mme. Letizia ever since they were children together and who was the mother of the future duchesse d'Abrantès, wondered " why she did not go to see her daughter-in-law under the circumstances :

" ' Signora Panoria,' said she, ' it is no good my going there if I want to be comforted. I must go to Julie or

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires,* Vol. III, p. 106.

to Christine—those two women make my sons happy; but the other—oh! no, no!'

"So saying, she snapped her lips together and opened her eyes very wide, a little habit she had when she wanted to let people know that she had just uttered something very important."[1]

Notwithstanding her aversion for her daughter-in-law, Mme. Letizia ended by going to see her—and that very day, too! The duchesse d'Abrantès tells us all about the visit. She had taken her daughters to the Théâtre Feydeau; her object in going to the play was to kill time until she could get news of her sons, and above all to reassure the public which, on seeing General Bonaparte's mother and sisters in a theatre, would be less inclined to think seriously of the events which were passing at Saint-Cloud at that moment and which were not yet concluded. The *Auteur dans son ménage* was being performed that evening.

"The piece was going on very smoothly," says Mme. d'Abrantès, "when the actors suddenly paused and the *auteur dans son ménage* in person advanced to the footlights and, having made his bow to the audience although he was still clad in his white dimity dressing-gown, said in a very loud voice:

"'*Citoyens!* General Bonaparte has just escaped assassination at Saint-Cloud at the hands of some traitors to their country!'

"On hearing these words, Mme. Leclerc uttered a terrible shriek which, notwithstanding the excitement caused by this news, made everybody turn and look at the box. . . . My mother suggested to her friends that

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 127.

she should take them home in her carriage. . . . 'I will first escort you home,' said my mother to her, 'and then I will take Paulette (Mme. Leclerc) to her house.'

"'No, no!' said Mme. Bonaparte, 'let us go to the rue Chantereine, to my daughter-in-law's house. That is the only place where we shall learn the truth.'"[1]

So they accordingly went there and heard some very reassuring news.

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 133.

PART II

THE WIFE OF THE FIRST CONSUL

CHAPTER I

Mme. Bonaparte moves into the Petit-Luxembourg palace—The polished manners of the old French nobility once more become the fashion—Mme. Bonaparte *mère* and Josephine—Josephine advises Murat to ask for Caroline Bonaparte's hand in marriage—Negotiations—Marriage of Murat and Caroline—Portrait of Caroline—History of a pearl necklace—Josephine's embarrassment—A lie settles everything—Josephine accepts bribes—The First Consul leaves the Petit-Luxembourg palace for the Tuileries—Review of troops in the cour du Carrousel—Josephine passes her first night at the Tuileries—She receives the diplomatic corps—Josephine's voice—Strife between Josephine and Lucien—Lucien resigns the post of Secretary of State for the home department in order to become French ambassador to Madrid—A curious *soirée* at the Tuileries—Josephine makes fresh plans for Hortense's marriage—Lucien will have nothing to do with her—Hortense—Her affection for Duroc—Josephine forces her to marry Louis—An odious rumour is contradicted.

ON the 20th *brumaire*, Mme. Bonaparte took up her abode at the Luxemburg palace or rather at the Petit-Luxembourg. The notary Raguideau must have thought to himself that day that if his client had listened to his advice when he recommended her to marry a rich man instead of a little general who had nothing but "a cloak and a sword," the marriage settlement might have been larger but Mme. Bonaparte would have gained nothing. The future held other surprises in store for Maître Raguideau and Mme. Bonaparte. Meanwhile, if we believe the *Moniteur* of the 20th *brumaire*, the present had already

afforded one very unexpected surprise to a common soldier. This paper says that a grenadier named Pomiès had had the sleeve of his coat torn at Saint-Cloud while warding off a blow from a dagger aimed at General Bonaparte. In order to thank him for this act of devotion, the general had invited him to breakfast, when the *citoyenne* Bonaparte embraced him and gave him a diamond ring worth two thousand *écus* (6000 francs or £240).

It is a pretty story, but unfortunately it is not true. Nobody had threatened General Bonaparte with a dagger at Saint-Cloud, and so he had to thank nobody for having saved his life; the *citoyenne* Bonaparte never kissed the grenadier Pomiès. It was Lucien who had invented the story and sent it to the *Moniteur* in order to increase his brother's popularity, and to win over to his side the soldiers of the *armée du Rhin* who were terribly jealous of their brothers in arms belonging to the *armée d'Italie.*

"At the Petit-Luxembourg, General Bonaparte occupied the suite of apartments on the ground floor to the right on entering by the rue de Vaugirard. His study was close to a secret staircase leading to the first floor where Josephine lived."[1] Bourrienne took up his abode in the suite of apartments directly over his master's quarters.

Bonaparte always breakfasted with his wife, his stepdaughter Hortense, and Bourrienne, and then went back to his study as soon as the repast was over. At five o'clock he returned for dinner. After dinner he went up with Josephine to her own suite of apartments. It

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 129.

was there that he began to receive some of his own particular friends every evening.

M. de Talleyrand (who was no longer Minister, but who was soon to become one again), the Ministers Berthier, Gaudin, Forfait, Laplace, Fouché, and Reinhardt were among the *habitués*. The First Consul's brothers, Joseph and Lucien, Regnault (de Saint-Jean d'Angély), Defermon, Berlier, Monge, Boulay (de la Meurthe) and Cambacérès were also often there. It was at the Luxemburg, in Mme. Bonaparte's *salon*, that the word *Madame*, which had been out of fashion for so long, began to be heard once more. This fact, very unimportant in itself, meant much at that time and produced a wonderful effect. Paris had grown weary of the upheavals which had disturbed her existence for the last ten years ; Paris was sick of the misery and poverty which she had now endured for so long. She now wanted security, work, luxury ; she longed for happiness, comfort, peace among her inhabitants ; she wanted to feel sure that her future was in safe hands. All these blessings the illegal events of the 18th *brumaire* gave to France. People became sociable, like true Frenchmen. The *salons* opened one by one. Men wanted to exchange their impressions and opinions with one another and not to treat their next-door neighbours as if they were spies ; they wanted to discuss the events which had taken place during the last few months ; they wanted to tell one another and to be told that their troubles were at an end, that the reign of the tyrant was over and that the reign of law and order was about to commence.

This is what the revival of the word *Madame* meant to everybody. " This first sign of a return to the polished

manners of the France of former days," says Bourrienne, " frightened a few susceptible Republicans ; later certain persons at the Tuileries made up for lost time by ordering their servants to address them as *Your Highness* before company, but plain *Monseigneur* when alone with their master."[1]

Mme. Bonaparte did the honours of her *salon* with better grace than ever : it is so easy and, at the same time, so pleasant to smile and to be kind and affable when things are going well with us, when everybody is anxious to serve us and when we seem to swim in an ocean of bliss !

But one day this ocean of bliss was ruffled by a little storm. Mme. Bonaparte *mère* appeared at the Luxemburg ; she was very indignant at certain gossip and rumours concerning her son Lucien, and she came to ask the First Consul to put a stop to this explosion of hatred against her son ; she attributed this animosity to the police ; and, as Fouché was minister of the police, it was against this erstwhile Oratorian with whom Lucien had had a very violent altercation on the 18th *germinal, an* VIII,[2] that the mother of the First Consul came to demand justice.

" This proceeding, suggested by her affection for her son," says Lucien, " was productive of a very angry scene at which Mme. Bonaparte (Josephine, who was supposed to favour the minister of the police) wept profusely and at which it was said—the report, however, had no truth in it—the Consul, in taking his wife's part, was guilty of very disrespectful conduct towards his mother.

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 132.
[2] Miot de Mélito, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 265.

Belloli, delt. *François, sculpt.*

LUCIEN BONAPARTE

From the collection of H. H. Raphael, Esq., M.P.

" Our mother, however, was always particularly careful not to offend her daughter-in-law. She merely told her, on taking leave of her, that she hoped she would warn her *friend* Fouché (this was what gave offence[1]) that she considered herself quite capable of making anybody who dared to slander her sons repent of their folly. To which the Consul replied, when he accompanied her to her carriage, that he could see that she only read English newspapers, which not only slandered her dear Lucien but tried to bespatter him and the whole family with mud. ' That may be,' our mother replied, ' but I can't prevent the English writing such things, while in the case of the *citoyen* Fouché it is quite a different matter ' "[2]

It was during the General and Mme. Bonaparte's short sojourn at the Petit-Luxembourg that Caroline's marriage with General Murat was arranged. Josephine had a hand in the transaction.

My readers may remember that when the glorious mission of bearing to the *Directoire* the treaty of Cherasco concluded between General Bonaparte and the King of Sardinia was entrusted to Murat, Mme. Bonaparte received him with great kindness. He returned to Italy with her; their intimacy and the incidents which took place during a breakfast given by Murat to some cavalry officers had given rise to a good deal of gossip which spiteful folk immediately repeated to the commander-in-chief, and which, either rightly or wrongly, aroused jealous suspicions in his breast. Since then, he had

[1] Mme. Bonaparte received from Fouché, when he was minister of the police, the sum of one thousand *francs* a day for spying upon her husband.

[2] Th. Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, Vol. II.

shown a good deal of dislike for this aide-de-camp ; and the non-execution by Murat of the commands which he had received to charge Wurmser when outside the walls of Mantua, had quite put him into Bonaparte's black books.[1] When the commander-in-chief chose those officers whom he wished the minister of war to allow to accompany him to Egypt, Murat's name did not figure on the list. Murat, however, received commands to join the *armée d'Egypte*. Bourrienne says that he sailed on the *Orient* in company with General Bonaparte. This is a mistake. Murat sailed from Genoa on the *Artémise*, so he could not possibly have been with General Bonaparte. The latter had heard that Murat's appointment was due to feminine influence ; the names of Mme. Tallien and Mme. Bonaparte were mentioned. . . . This fact was not calculated to help him forget his old suspicions. And so Murat remained in disgrace. While in Egypt, he was frequently sent away from head-quarters on dangerous and difficult missions ; and it seems that he was still in disgrace when more rumours reached the ear of the commander-in-chief ; for, " although Bonaparte did not tell me," says Bourrienne, " I have every reason to believe that Murat's name was coupled with that of M. Charles when Junot made his indiscreet disclosures on the banks of the Messoudiah."[2] Murat, by dint of sacrificing himself on all occasions, and by displaying extraordinary courage, managed to regain his general's esteem ; his mad bravery at the battle of Aboukir

[1] " Murat, owing to his way of executing orders, had almost entirely lost his reputation for bravery since his return from Paris, and Bonaparte had ceased to bestow any favours upon him " (*Mémoires du duc de Raguse*, Vol. I, p. 244).

[2] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 287.

obliterated the past, and the very personal services rendered by Murat on the 19th *brumaire* by entering the hall of the *Conseil des Cinq-Cents* at the head of his grenadiers and by dispersing the deputies, won Bonaparte's favour for evermore.

Josephine, whose one idea was to win people over to her side and thus counterbalance the Bonaparte family's power over her husband had, by her kindness and good-nature, earned Murat's gratitude and friendship. She thought she could bind him still more firmly to her own and her husband's cause by making him marry one of the First Consul's sisters. By doing this, she would win the young couple over to her side and thus gain two friends in the Bonaparte family ; for, as they would owe their happiness to her, they would be ready to take her part against her spiteful enemies. So she took the first step and proposed straight out to Murat that he should marry into her husband's family. It was not a difficult matter to persuade the young officer to ask for the hand of the young girl he loved, for " Murat was madly in love with Mlle. Bonaparte."[1]

But Murat first wanted to ask the advice of M. Collot, who, at that time, was very intimate with his general.

M. Collot strongly advised Murat to go and speak to the First Consul himself upon the matter, and make a formal proposal for the hand of his sister while reminding him of the fact that Caroline had seemed very pleased to see him both at Milan and at Montebello. The truth of the matter was that " Caroline Bonaparte was passionately attached to Murat."[2]

[1] *Mémoires de la duchesse d'Abrantès*, Vol II, p 241.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 241.

The First Consul listened to Murat's request more with the air of a sovereign listening to the supplication of some humble serf, than as if he were conversing with a brother-in-arms. He looked very severe, said that he would think the matter over, but would not give Murat a positive reply.[1] He naturally wished to consult his sister and his family. And then Murat's proposal was not the only proposal he had lately received: General Lannes, for his part, had begged for the hand of the beautiful Caroline, and General Bessières, who had a great deal of influence over the First Consul, was doing his utmost to further Lannes' cause.

That very same evening after dinner, Bonaparte, while in the little *salon* of the Petit-Luxembourg, informed his wife of the two young officers' proposals. Eugène and Hortense as well as Bourrienne were present, and they all had something to say about the matter. Mme. Bonaparte declared, which was quite true, that she was delighted to learn that her sister-in-law had received two proposals; and she did her very best, and used all her charms and graces and said everything she could think of to help Murat to win the day. Eugène and Hortense re-echoed their mother's words. Bourrienne was careful to follow suit. Somebody said that the young couple had been devoted to each other ever since they had been so long together in Italy; that Murat, on the 19th *brumaire*, had given the most splendid proof of his devotion to the general; that he was one of the handsomest soldiers in the army; and that he was one of the bravest.

[1] *Mémoires de Bourrienne*, Vol. III, p. 289. "Cambacérès told me one day that Napoleon had hesitated for a long time before giving his sister in marriage to Murat. . . ." (*Mémoires du général Lamarque*, Vol. II, p. 196.

"Yes," replied Bonaparte, "I allow that Murat behaved splendidly at Aboukir." But it is not true, as Bourrienne says, that the First Consul declared that Murat being the son of an innkeeper could not marry into his family.[1]

Lannes was the son of a dyer, and the First Consul would have gladly given his sister Caroline to him if he had not been divorced. But Mme. Bonaparte entreated so earnestly, and pleaded the cause of Murat and Caroline with so much charm and coaxed the general so prettily, that she won the day before they separated. "All things considered," said Bonaparte that same evening to Bourrienne, "Murat suits my sister; and then, no one will be able to say that I am proud, or that I am anxious to marry my family to grand folk. If I had given my sister in marriage to a nobleman, all your Jacobins would have cried out that I was a counter-revolutionist. Moreover, I am very glad that my wife has taken such an interest in the marriage: you can easily guess my reasons. . . ."[2] My readers know those reasons.

"Caroline Bonaparte was a very pretty girl, as fresh as a rose; her beauty, as regards regular features, could not be compared to that of Mme. Leclerc; but she was more pleasing, perhaps, on account of her expression and her exquisite complexion. And then, her figure was not nearly so fine as that of her elder sister. Her head was out of proportion with the rest of her body; it was much too big. But her skin was like the inside of a rose-leaf. Her hands and feet were beautiful enough to serve as models. She, like all the Bonapartes, had pretty

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 290.
[2] *Ibid.*

teeth. As for her hair, it was nothing remarkable; it was scanty and light auburn in colour."[1]

This marriage put a stop to all the scandal which had lately been circulated in Paris and in Italy concerning Mme. Bonaparte's friendship with Murat. Caroline would have a very suitable establishment in marrying him. There had already been some talk of espousing her to Moreau and later to Augereau; the fact that Lannes had just divorced his wife had made the Bonaparte family hesitate before giving her to that brave soldier. The whole family agreed that Murat was a very suitable husband for Caroline, and so the marriage was celebrated.

"It took place very quietly at the Luxemburg," says Bourrienne; "the First Consul had not begun to consider the affairs of his family of equal importance with those of the State."[2]

Bourrienne is mistaken: the marriage was celebrated in the *commune* of Plailly, near Mortefontaine, in the department of Oise.[3]

General Bonaparte, as always, acted the part of a good brother at his sister Caroline's marriage. He was not rich in those days; nevertheless, he presented her with a dowry of 30,000 francs (£1200). And he wished, what is more, to give her the usual wedding-present. As he had no money, he chose from among his wife's numerous jewels a diamond necklace and gave it to his sister. Mme. Bonaparte was good-natured, but her good-nature was not so excessive that she could make up her mind to part with a diamond necklace for a sister-in-law of

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, pp. 234–5.
[2] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 291.
[3] *Bourrienne et ses erreurs*, Vol. I, p. 259.

whom she was not particularly fond. So the general's act displeased her; she forgot that her husband was short of money because he had just paid her debts. She could think of nothing but of getting another necklace to replace the old one; she soon found a way to get what she wanted. She knew that Foncier, the fashionable jeweller, had the finest collection of pearls imaginable in his shop windows. These pearls, said Foncier, had once belonged to Marie-Antoinette. Now Mme. Bonaparte knew that Foncier would not part with them for less than 250,000 francs (£10,000), says Bourrienne; 500,000 francs (£20,000), says Mme. d'Abrantès.[1]

But when she wanted a thing very badly, she cared little for the price: she always bought the article and left the bill to take care of itself. Don't things always settle themselves somehow or other in this world? Many and many a time had she noticed this fact! So she bought the set of pearls and then told General Berthier that this little purchase had put her into a very tight corner. "I thought I should have been able to pay Foncier out of my savings," said she, "but as he is in such a hurry for the money—you understand. . . ." Napoleon often called Berthier a booby; but Josephine did not agree with him. Berthier understood perfectly well and did what Josephine required him to do. He hoped that Mme. Bonaparte would reward him by persuading the First Consul to allow his mistress, Mme. Visconti, whom he had already refused to receive, to come to the Tuileries. As Berthier was at the top of affairs in the war office, it was an easy matter to get at some capital! A signature costs nobody anything! In

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Histoire des salons de Paris*, Vol. III, p. 421.

short, the jeweller's bill was paid with money destined to pay the amounts of certain hospitals in Italy! This very simple and eminently honourable arrangement gave general satisfaction; Foncier was delighted to sell the jewels, Berthier was glad to offer them to Mme. Bonaparte, and the latter was charmed to be able to sit and admire them in her jewel-case. But she was not content with merely owning the ornaments: what was the good of having them if she could not wear them? She *must* wear them. It is true that she had plenty of opportunities to do so; but General Bonaparte knew all about his wife's jewels: he would immediately notice if she wore the new pearls. What explanation would she be able to give? It was certainly much easier to buy 500,000 francs' worth of pearls without paying a *sou* than to wear them.

She thought the matter over again and again and raked her brains in her endeavour to find an excuse for wearing her jewels, at the same time concealing the real facts from her husband's piercing eye, and give a satisfactory reply to the questions which Bonaparte would certainly put to her on seeing the superb pearls. But women are always ready with an explanation on these occasions. Mme. Bonaparte was a fine hand at inventing stories. At last one day, in her ever-increasing despair at the thought that she owned the most beautiful collection of pearls in Paris and that she dared not show them, she tried them on to see how they suited her. Mme. de Rémusat was present. She knew nothing about the pearls; but she was too clever, and she knew Mme. Bonaparte too well, not to guess by what that lady said and what she did not say that their origin was rather doubtful.

"My goodness!" cried poor Josephine, "I really don't know how I shall ever be able to wear these pearls; Bonaparte will make such a scene! And yet, after all, they were only a little present from a father for whose son I managed to obtain a pardon."

She appeared quite touched by the pretty story which she had just invented; she seemed ready to shed tears—tears of pity and also, perhaps, of disgust.

Mme. de Rémusat put on a very grave expression and remarked to her that the First Consul could not possibly find fault with her for her noble conduct.

"No, no!" cried Josephine, terrified; "whatever you do, don't say a word about it. The mere thought of such a thing makes me tremble."[1]

A splendid idea now occurred to her. She sent for her husband's private secretary and said to him:

"Bourrienne, we are going to a grand reception to-morrow. I want to wear my pearls; but you know that Bonaparte will scold me if he suspects anything. I beg of you, Bourrienne, keep by my side so that if he asks me where I got them, I may be able to tell him without hesitating that I have had them for a long time."[2]

Was not Mme. d'Abrantès perfectly right when she said that Josephine "lied whenever she thought it necessary to do so?"[3] Yes, Mme. Bonaparte unfortunately was far from disdaining suspicious subterfuges; she could stoop to do mean things; she did not belong to those noble-minded creatures who prefer to acknowledge that they are in the wrong rather than demean themselves by hiding their faults with a lie. She lied

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Histoire des salons de Paris*, Vol. III, p. 422.
[2] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 293.
[3] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 418.

like a chambermaid who has been caught stealing her mistress's hairpins.

Bourrienne, who seems to have been particularly partial to nasty situations, gladly humoured Mme. Bonaparte. She wore the pearls as she had said she intended to do. Her husband, as she had foreseen, did not fail to notice them.

"Well, what have you got there? How lovely you look to-night! Where did you get those pearls? I don't think I've ever seen them before."

"Oh, good gracious! that's the necklace which the Cisalpine Republic gave me. I've put it in my hair."

"But yet it seems to me——"

"Here, ask Bourrienne, he'll tell you."

"Well, Bourrienne, what have you to say about the matter? Do you remember them?"

"Yes, general, I remember quite well having seen them already."

And Bourrienne adds jesuitically:

"I was not lying, for Mme. Bonaparte had already shown them to me, and it was quite true that Josephine had been given a pearl necklace by the Cisalpine Republic, but their pearls were incomparably less beautiful than those of Foncier."[1]

We are at a loss to know which to admire most in this little affair, either the beautiful Creole's fertile imagination and the charming manner in which she played this little comedy, or General Berthier's guilty complacency, or the excessive affability of General Bonaparte's private secretary and his subsequent indiscretion in betraying,

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 293. Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 273.

in his memoirs, her of whom he had once been proud to boast that he was her friend. The First Consul suspected nothing; had he but known how he had been hoodwinked! And had he but known that his wife received one thousand francs a day from Fouché for keeping that individual informed of all that went on at the Tuileries![1] Poor Bonaparte! neither did he know that his good Josephine "received the sum of 500,000 francs (£20,000) for giving the contract for supplying the *armée d'Italie* with provisions to the Compagnie Flachat, whose shameful chicanery caused such awful misery and suffering among our troops during the siege of Genoa and eventually forced Masséna to treat with Mélas."[2]

General Bonaparte had not been many weeks at the Luxemburg when he, with wonderful political foresight, saw that he was the right person in the right place and determined to act. Those whom he called the Jacobins considered him as a bulwark against the attacks of the royalists who, if he came to an untimely end, would soon put up their heads again; the royalists, for their part, considered him capable of curbing the ardour of the revolutionists. This was how France came to put herself so quickly into the power of one man; but we must remember that that man was a genius who knew how to stand at the helm and steer with infinite skill between the rocks with which the route he intended to take was beset.

He, with his ambition and his ever-open eye, considered that the time had come to leave the Luxemburg and to take up his abode at the Tuileries. The word Tuileries

[1] Fouché, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 178.
[2] Général Thiébault, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 364.

was not uttered: it would have reminded people of the days of royalty and despotism; so it was called the *Palace of the Government*, a term which aroused no suspicions. Bonaparte, however, reserved the royal apartments for his own use; but he took care, in order not to be alone at the Tuileries, to give the pavillon de Flore to the third consul Lebrun. As for Cambacérès, who already foresaw another removal in the near future, he would not accept a lodging in the palace; he preferred to take up his abode at the *hôtel*, which he continued to occupy for many years, just opposite the entrance to the Carrousel.

It was not without a certain feeling of apprehension that General Bonaparte made up his mind to take this important step, a step which apparently gave him no more power, but which, in reality, placed the sceptre within his reach. The fruit was about to ripen: he was to gather it before four years had elapsed. Meanwhile, everything having been prepared on the previous evening for this little change of residence, in reality a very important event, the First Consul said to Bourrienne, on the morning of the 30th *pluviôse*, as soon as he caught sight of him:

"Well, Bourrienne, so at last we are going to sleep at the Tuileries!"[1] In saying which, he pinched his wife's cheek and gave her a kiss.

They left the Petit-Luxembourg.

The departure was accomplished with all possible pomp and display. The entire garrison of Paris was on duty, and, as in the old days of the monarchy, lined the

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 319. Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Histoire des salons de Paris*, Vol. III, p. 317.

streets through which the procession was to pass. The First Consul's equipage was drawn by six white horses; when the populace, which came in crowds to view this novel sight, knew that these horses were a diplomatic present from the emperor of Germany to the general who had negotiated the peace of Campo-Formio, an indescribable scene of enthusiasm took place. The people looked upon the taking possession of the Tuileries by a general seated in a carriage drawn by horses which reminded them quite as much of his fame as a peace-maker as of his fame as a warrior on the battlefield, as the sign of a peaceful future. The carriage of the *Conseil d'Etat* followed that of the First Consul. But as there were no private carriages in those days in Paris, Napoleon had been obliged to charter hackney coaches whose numbers were hidden by pieces of cardboard painted the same colour as the body of the coach. The few suitable carriages and liveries which they had been able to unearth were reserved for the use of the ministers. The general effect was rather shabby. The First Consul noticed this fact and said:

"I need only forbid cabs to enter the courtyard and it will soon be filled with brand-new equipages."[1]

General Bonaparte, well aware of the people's fondness for military *fêtes*, had cleverly concealed the fact that he was taking possession of the Tuileries, once the abode of the kings of France, by making his change of residence the occasion of a splendid military display. The troops which followed in his train looked positively magnificent. As each detachment passed into the cour du Carrousel they parted and drew up on either side in

[1] *Souvenirs du baron de Barante*, Vol. I, p. 55.

long rows of glittering steel. At last the courtyard was so full it could hold no more. The Carrousel was quite a different place to what it is nowadays; it was a very small place then with houses and streets to the right and to the left; in fact, it was like a miniature *quartier* all to itself.

On entering the Carrousel, the First Consul alighted from his carriage, sprang on to a horse which had been waiting for him and proceeded to review these splendid troops. The attention of the crowd was attracted by the regiment of the *guides*, or consular guard, commanded by Bessières and Eugène de Beauharnais, whose fine uniform and martial bearing were much admired.

The First Consul rode slowly along the ranks. He took care to address a few short words of praise to each commander; he spoke to several soldiers, and when they were about to march past him, he went and placed himself close to the gate of the Tuileries. General Murat was on his right hand, and General Lannes on his left. The march past began. When the 96th, 43rd and 30th regiments marched by bearing their flags, which were now nothing but sticks with a few poor, blackened rags, torn and soiled by a hundred battles and by long years of warfare, hanging to them, the First Consul, overcome with emotion and respect for these glorious trophies, took off his hat and bowed his head. Everybody saw the gesture. A sort of electric current instantly passed from the general's heart into the hearts of officers and men alike; and the long acclamations of the populace showed Bonaparte that his respect for the flag had won the heart of the French nation. After this imposing scene, he was free to ascend the staircase of the kings'

BONAPARTE FIRST CONSUL.

From a coloured line engraving, drawn and engraved by Chataiguier, in the Barras collection of H. H. Raphael, Esq., M.P.

palace as its future lord and master, while the huge concourse of spectators repeated frenzied cries expressive of their affection and delight: "Long life to the First Consul! Long live General Bonaparte!"

Mme. Bonaparte, who had left the Petit-Luxembourg before the official procession started, arrived first at the Tuileries. The consul Lebrun had kindly placed the windows of his new abode in the pavillon de Flore at her disposal; she sat there with her niece Mlle. de Beauharnais, and another niece Mme. de Lavalette, Mme. Murat, the First Consul's sister, who had only been married for a few days, and the wives of some of the generals. All these ladies were as splendidly attired as the severely simple Greek fashions of those days allowed; they waved their handkerchiefs and their thin silk shawls from the open windows. Mme. Bonaparte, on this happy day of the 30th *pluviôse, an* VIII, was much admired for her beauty, which happiness had enhanced to an extraordinary degree; a halo of glory seemed to hover round her forehead. Her daughter Hortense stood at the same window. "She was really charming at that time; with her slender figure and her beautiful fair hair, her soft, big eyes and her charm of manner, no one could have told whether she was French or Creole."[1]

This day was one of those days which are never forgotten. For Mme Bonaparte, it was the first day of her power; she made her first appearance as a veritable sovereign; she was now at the Tuileries and her reign was inaugurated by the flattering homage which she received from the army and from all the most influential

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Salons de Paris*, Vol. III, p. 329.

people in the country. When night came, just as the First Consul was about to get into bed, he said laughing to his wife :

" Come, little Creole, come and sleep in your master's bed."[1]

Two days later, the 2nd *ventôse* (February 21st) Bonaparte, assuming the rôle of head of the state, granted an audience to the diplomatic corps. The Spanish ambassador, the marquis de Musquiez ; M. Giustiniani, ambassador to Rome ; the duca di Serbelloni, ambassador of the Cisalpine Republic, who had received him so hospitably in his superb palace in Milan ; M. de Schimmelpenninck, ambassador and Minister plenipotentiary to the Batavian Republic ; M. Zeltner, Minister plenipotentiary to Baden ; the baron de Reitzenstein, Minister plenipotentiary to the Swiss Republic ; M. Bonardi, Minister plenipotentiary to the Ligurian Republic ; M. Manthey, the Danish chargé d'affaires ; M. Kopp, chargé d'affaires to Hesse-Cassel ; M. Signeul, chargé d'affaires to Sweden, and M. Classen, director of the Danish chamber of commerce, were all present. When the audience was over, the ambassadors were ushered into the presence of Josephine, who was thus enabled to play the part of a sovereign for the first time. This little ceremony became a custom. " After these official audiences, the company always went to pay their respects to Mme. Bonaparte, just as the nobility, in the old days, after having been presented to the king, always went to pay their respects to the queen."[2] And then Mme. Bonaparte performed her part as a sovereign in a remark-

[1] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 170.
[2] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. IV, p. 5.

able manner. Did not Michelet say: "Every Frenchwoman has something of the queen in her"? Now every queen has a court. M. Thiers says: "There were neither maids of honour nor chamberlains at this newly created court; etiquette was severe almost to the verge of affectation. The court took care to avoid the faults of the *Directoire* which, with its absurd imitation of antique fashions combined with dissolute morals, had covered the representatives of the government with ridicule. Nobody said very much; but everybody observed what their neighbours did; and all, with one accord, watched the extraordinary personage who had already accomplished such marvellous things and who gave promise of still greater deeds."[1]

However, during the first few weeks of his sojourn at the Tuileries, Bonaparte, whose tastes were extremely plain, led a very simple life and continued to keep to all his old habits. The luxury with which he surrounded himself in after years constituted part of his system of government and was not prompted by any desire to satisfy his own personal tastes.

"He and Josephine lived together in the greatest intimacy; he descended every night to Josephine's private suite of apartments by a little staircase which led out of the dressing-room adjoining his study which had once served as an oratory to Marie de Medici."[2]

The winter of 1800 was very gay, especially gay if we compare it with previous winters. The nineteenth century was beginning under very favourable auspices. Ever since General Bonaparte had taken the reins of the State

[1] Thiers, *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire.*
[2] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 328.

in his own firm grasp, confidence had begun to revive and prosperity reappeared as if by enchantment—so much resource is there in our old French fatherland, so much energy and such industry and thrift among its inhabitants! The *émigrés* were returning in shoals; the public mind was growing calmer; money was beginning to circulate; and the populace was beginning to hope for a long series of peaceful years, years of work and security at home and abroad. The four years of the Consulate are the best which France has ever known. But this prosperity had to be purchased at the point of the bayonet. Austria, irritated by her disasters in Switzerland, was making great preparations for a final effort. Masséna had been driven back by an army stronger than his own as far as Genoa where he seemed doomed to perdition. Suchet, cut off from his commander-in-chief, was beating a retreat towards Nice; and the Austrians, convinced that Masséna could not escape them, were planning to invade Provence, for they probably knew that Suchet had not forces enough to protect that country from their attacks.

Suddenly, and as if by one of those wonderful transformation effects only seen on the stage, the scene changed. The First Consul's genius enabled him to convey a whole French army over the ice-clad summits of the Alps: men, horses, cannons, carriages, all passed over, and the most marvellous and the briefest of campaigns ended in that apotheosis of glory, the thunder-clap of Marengo. Austria was finally driven from Italy, and then the First Consul returned to Paris.

Nothing can describe the joy, the enthusiasm with which he was received: throughout his journey back

to Paris, he was greeted with cries and demonstrations of affection; these signs of the people's love for him touched him deeply. Paris, in particular, received him with such marks of admiration, that he was touched to the heart. "With what emotion," says Bourrienne, "did he not say to me one day when returning from a review: 'Bourrienne, do you hear how their shouts of joy still re-echo? These sounds are as sweet to my ears as Josephine's voice; how happy and how proud am I to be loved by such a nation!'"[1]

It would seem as if the general's newly-won fortune and the sudden rise to power of the Bonaparte family ought to have made them perfectly happy; and yet they were far from being so. Matters were still strained between Mme. Bonaparte and her brothers and sisters-in-law. Lucien, very soon after the *coup d'Etat* of the 18th *brumaire*, had been appointed Secretary of State for the home department by the First Consul in recognition of the valuable services rendered by him at Saint-Cloud on the 19th *brumaire*. He succeeded Laplace, the illustrious author of *La Mécanique celeste*, a gifted mathematician, who, however, could not stoop to attend to such trivialities as governmental affairs and so only kept his post a few days.

It was while Lucien was Secretary of State that certain abominable rumours concerning him reached the ear of the First Consul. Bonaparte was persuaded to believe in the existence of a number of facts which were entirely false. The duchesse d'Abrantès wrote: "I can to-day affirm that those persons even made the First Consul believe that his life was threatened. For

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. IV, p. 228.

truth's sake, I ought to add that they never really managed to persuade him that he was in any real danger, but the mouth which accused the brother belonged to a person who was also very dear to him. When Bonaparte, harassed and naturally much distressed by all the different reports with which his ears were assailed, thought that some stupid mistake had given rise to these reports, he said as Antiochus once said :

> " ' What hand so dear to us aimed the blow ?
> Was it yours, madam, or the hand of my brother ? '

" But the hatred which had been kindled between Mme. Bonaparte and her brothers-in-law was an obstacle to all domestic happiness in this numerous family."[1]

The duchesse d'Abrantès, who was not only highly intellectual but a most honest creature into the bargain, does not seem to have known that the rumours she mentions were not all false ; but she would not have made such grave allegations against Mme. Bonaparte if she had not been quite certain of her facts, and she, more than anyone else, was in a position to see and know everything ; but we feel obliged to quote this singular passage from her memoirs in order to give an idea of the strained relations existing between the two families and of the animosity of Mme. Bonaparte who could stoop to use that most odious of weapons, slander, in order to harm Lucien in his brother's opinion and kill his affection for him. The general, who would have liked to see all his relations, including his wife, happy and good friends with one another, was deeply grieved by this state of latent hostility. He loved his brother ;

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 25.

he was really wounded by his wife's slanderous assertions; "one minute he hated Lucien, the next minute he loved him as much as ever; his feelings towards him were similar to those we experience for a beloved mistress whom we know we cannot trust."[1] So in order to put a stop to this state of affairs so painful to himself, so awkward for his wife, and so disagreeable for Lucien, who, however, was too busy trying to fill his pockets to have been guilty of the offences with which his sister-in-law accused him, he seized the opportunity afforded by the discovery of his brother's shameful speculations,[2] to deprive him of his post as Secretary of State for the home department: by doing this, he gave his wife satisfaction, appeased public opinion, and reassured himself as to the untruth of any suspicions which might still be lingering in his mind as to the accusations which had reached his ear; he, as always, played the part of a good brother and gave Lucien, who deserved nothing, compensation in the form of the post of ambassador to Madrid.[3]

The Tuileries presented a strange appearance on the evening when Lucien's disgrace was made public property; Mme. Bonaparte "was seated in a big arm-chair. . . . She pretended to be sunk in deep thought, and she tried to keep so in order to hide her delight from her ladies. Her daughter, who was even less accomplished in the art of concealing her feelings, could not hide her pleasure;

[1] Stanislas Girardin, *Journal et souvenirs*, Vol. I, p. 197.

[2] *Mémoires de Miot de Mélito*, Vol. I, p. 301. *Mémoires de Constant*, Vol. I, p. 472.

[3] Those writers who seem to think it is their duty to praise the Bonaparte family through thick and thin, attribute Lucien's disgrace to the imprudent publication of his work: *Parallèle entre César, Cromwell et Bonaparte*. See *Mémoires de Méneval*, Vol. III, p. 107.

she was seated opposite her mother. The happy expression on her face contrasted strangely with the profound melancholy depicted in Mme. Baciocchi's countenance. . . . The small circle of ladies included Mmes. Lecourbe, Chauvelin, and Clary ; a game of *reversi* was going on in a corner of the *salon*. The gentlemen passed to and fro ; they all looked more or less embarrassed : some by Mme. Baciocchi's very evident grief, some by Hortense's gaiety.

Several guests were present, among others : Lannes, Murat, Lecourbe and four or five aides-de-camp. The Ministers included Réal, Champagny, Miot ; among the public functionaries were noticed Dubois, prefect of police ; Alexandre de la Rochefoucault, Chauvelin, Jaucourt, Chaptal radiant with his recent success.[1] Stanislas Girardin was also there ; he, on noticing Mme. Baciocchi's grief, went up to her and whispered a few words of comfort into her ear.

" I cannot hide my grief," replied the First Consul's sister ; " I feel that I shall soon have cause to shed more tears."

" Restrain them, madame, for they will only afford keen pleasure to certain persons. . . ."

Meanwhile, the First Consul was engaged in a long conversation with his brother Lucien. It was noticed that his face was drawn and his features distorted when he entered the *salon* at the conclusion of this painful interview.

Nothing grieved him more than these continual family squabbles ; they positively wrung his heart with anguish.

[1] *Journal et souvenirs de Stanislas Girardin*, Vol. I, p. 103. Chaptal had been appointed to take Lucien's place as Secretary of State for the home department.

Lucien pretended to be in high spirits ; in fact, his high spirits were so exaggerated that they ceased to be natural. He went up to his sister-in-law, whispered something in her ear, and, before bidding her farewell, asked with a charming smile what he could do for her in Madrid. Nothing could have been stranger than to see this man and woman, who detested each other from the bottom of their hearts, trying to be polite.

Lucien says in his memoirs :

" She begged me to send or to bring back some of the fans for which that country is so celebrated, a fact of which I was not aware. . . . However, my sister-in-law and her daughter Hortense were, as usual, very polite when they said good-bye."[1]

But Lucien, notwithstanding this seeming cordiality, knew perfectly well what to expect of his sister-in-law.

" It was," says he, " that hatred for me which she neither had the strength, nor the sense, nor the wish to repress which caused, or, to speak the truth, increased her husband's antipathy for me."[2]

And then, he could not help speaking bitterly to his friends of the coolness which he had sometimes noticed in the general's conduct towards him, and he said : " My brother is much more inclined to believe the treacherous insinuations of a woman whom he ought to know well enough by this time not to sacrifice his family to her."[3]

A few days later, on the 18th *brumaire*, exactly one year after the *coup d'Etat* in which he had played such an important part, Lucien started for Spain, to the great

[1] Th. Jung, *Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 387.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 213.
[3] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 26.

delight of his sister-in-law, whose fears had been aroused by the publication of Lucien's book in which he compared his brother to Cæsar and Cromwell,[1] and in which work she fancied her brother-in-law hinted that Bonaparte ought to divorce his wife ; she and Mme. Benezech[2] had shed tears over it ; and so she was delighted when the author of the pamphlet went and took all cause for anxiety with him.

We have already seen that Mme. Bonaparte, after the scenes of jealousy which had marked her husband's return from Egypt, had determined, in order to bring about a reconciliation with the Bonaparte family and thus win them over to her side, to betroth her daughter Hortense to the young Jérôme. But as that young rascal was only fifteen years of age at that time, the matter had gone no farther. As soon as Lucien was in Madrid, she began to make other plans for her daughter ; this time she wanted to appease her enemy Lucien, whose opinion, after that of Napoleon, was most considered by the other members of the Bonaparte family, by giving Hortense in marriage to him. She stifled her hatred of him, forgot the wrongs she had done him, and only waited for the return of the young ambassador before beginning this delicate diplomatic negotiation.

While she was planning this marriage, Lucien, strange to say, was also making matrimonial plans in Spain. Rumours reached Paris, and people really believed, that he was going to profit by his elevated position as ambassador and brother to the First Consul of the powerful and glorious French Republic in order to marry an Infanta.

[1] Méneval, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 107.
[2] Rœderer, *Mémories*, Vol. III, p. 349.

" It is quite true," says Lucien in his memoirs, " that plans were being made for a marriage with an Infanta, but that marriage was for *someone else ;* I owe the hatred which Josephine always displayed for me partly to the indiscretion of that *someone else.*"[1] It was quite natural that Mme. Bonaparte, on learning from her husband that Lucien was trying to arrange a marriage for his brother Napoleon, who was already provided with a wife, should not show any enthusiasm either for the project or for its author. As bigamy is forbidden in France, this plan could only be rendered feasible by the divorce of the First Consul's wife ; this would mean ruin to her, and the loss of her rank and all the advantages and privileges attached thereunto. Such a prospect, as we can easily imagine, was not calculated to afford her any pleasure.

" A little more," said Bonaparte one day to his brother Lucien, " a little more and Josephine would have become your deadly enemy. She is certainly very forbearing and as gentle as a dove."

" Why did you tell her anything about the matter ? " retorted Lucien ; " it is quite natural that my sister-in-law should feel angry."[2]

As for Lucien, he probably acted thus because he thought that, by proposing a marriage between the First Consul and the Infanta Isabella, daughter of the queen of Spain, who resembled Manuel Godoy, the queen's lover and so-called *Prince of Peace,* far more than she resembled her supposed father, king Charles VI, he was serving his brother's interests and the interests of the Bonaparte family and also perhaps the interest of France.

[1] Th. Jung, *Lucien et ses Mémoires,* Vol. II, pp. 67–8.
[2] *Ibid.,* p. 284.

But his real reason for proposing this marriage probably lay in the fact that it would enable him to pay out his brother's wife, that intruder whom the whole Bonaparte family detested and whom a divorce would soon sweep out of their path.[1] It was a capital plan; not only would Lucien be doing himself a good turn, but he would be able to taste the sweets of revenge: "He sought to do good to himself first, then evil to his neighbour."

Such sentiments are neither Christian nor charitable, but they are intensely human. And then, had not the First Consul, on his return from Egypt, declared aloud that he intended to divorce Josephine? If his fickle spouse had delayed her return a few hours longer, if she had not acted so cleverly in sending for her children and in throwing herself in tears at his feet, the matter would have been settled. Why should he not do now what he had been quite willing to do a year ago? That is just what the Parisians said and what Volney, one day, while joking, repeated to Bonaparte; whereupon the latter said:

"If I wanted to marry again, I should not choose a wife from a house which is tumbling to pieces."[2]

The First Consul sent no written reply to his brother's plans for a second marriage, but we may be allowed to conjecture that this plan tickled his vanity. At all events, this plan was not the cause of his coolness with Lucien.

As for Mme. Bonaparte, she waited until her brother-in-law had returned to Paris from his embassy in order to carry out her plans for a marriage between him and Hortense. It was not the first time that there had been

[1] Th. Jung, *Lucien et ses Mémoires*, Vol. II, pp. 67–8.
[2] Miot de Mélito *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p 297.

a question of a marriage for her. The son of the *directeur* Rewbell, who had been friends with Jérôme when they were boys together, who was later to be made general, compromise himself by shady speculations and finally be dismissed from the army, had already proposed. She refused him, "and this very proper refusal," says Mme. de Rémusat, "was the result of an error common to all young ladies of romantic disposition who think that, in order to be good and happy, they must only marry the man of their choice."[1] But this was not her reason for refusing the offer of M. le comte de Mun, a former *émigré*, whose name Mme. Bonaparte had got erased from the list of *émigrés* and to whom the future reserved the honour of becoming *pair de France*.

Mme. Bonaparte had a great weakness for the old nobility; she would have liked this marriage for her daughter, and she did everything she could to make it come off. On his return to France, M. de Mun recovered his fortune, which was considerable; and so, in many ways, it was a very suitable match for Mlle. de Beauharnais. However, the First Consul did not seem to think so highly of this plan; as for Hortense, she did not like it at all. She had heard that M. de Mun, during the emigration, had been in love with Mme. de Staël, and so she did not want to hear anything more about him. Her mother tried in vain to make her alter her mind; she remained obstinate.

At last Lucien returned from Spain with his pockets well lined. His sister-in-law did not trouble herself to find out whether this fortune had been honestly acquired or not; she also forgot the speculations which had

[1] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoirs*, Vol. I, p. 157.

caused Lucien's disgrace with the First Consul; she could think of nothing but her new plan. Hortense was twenty-two, and Lucien twenty-seven years of age; the marriage seemed likely to further her own particular interest; in short, things looked very promising. So she invited her brother-in-law to breakfast very soon after his arrival. Hortense was present; her mother had taken care to inform her of the reason of this diplomatic breakfast, which information accounted for the becoming blush which tinged her cheek from time to time. Mme. Bonaparte was as amiable as possible; although she said nothing definite, she gave her guest to understand that she would experience great satisfaction if he dropped the title of brother-in-law for the more intimate one of son-in-law. Lucien had not dabbled in diplomacy for nothing. He had no intention of marrying Hortense, so he only gave an evasive reply; but that reply was put in such a way as to show Mme. Boneparte, without offending her, that she must not count upon his consent.

"Josephine said no more," writes Lucien in his memoirs. "And yet my refusal was not couched in more positive terms than her proposal to me had been. I only wished to make her understand that I had no intention of remarrying. Naturally this fact transpired during my conversation with Josephine, and we were all relieved when the appearance of the First Consul put a stop to this awkward situation."[1]

Josephine had never really cared for Lucien although she would have liked to make him her son-in-law: she liked him still less after this little fiasco. She had

[1] Th. Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 268.

(From an engraving in Mr. Broadley's collection)

formerly included in her aversion for him that good Christine (his first wife, who died while still so young) because the kind-hearted First Consul had made her give her sister-in-law as a wedding-present a very beautiful necklace from her own jewel-box.[1] She never forgave Mme. Lucien for the fact that she had been forced to make her this present. One day, while at a ball given by Lucien, everybody remarked Josephine's cold, haughty behaviour, the result of bad taste and bad temper. She was beginning to assume the airs of a sovereign; when she entered a *salon*, she expected all the ladies to rise from their seats; when she left, the ladies rose again. And whenever she went to poor Christine's house, her sister-in-law had to walk behind her and to see her take the best seat, which had been reserved for the mistress of the house; Christine had to follow her through the *salons* like a dog trotting behind its master. People remarked to one another that "Mme. Bonaparte might have been more polite and more sisterly, and that she ought to have offered her arm to Mme. Lucien instead of making her walk before or behind her. But Christine was also Mme. Lucien, and that name always aroused ire in Mme. Bonaparte's breast; there was war to the knife between her and Lucien."[2] What tears poor Christine shed thanks to that *good-natured* Josephine's heartless behaviour!

Mme. Bonaparte had told her daughter why she had invited Lucien; she cared little for her daughter's wishes. She was so wrapped up in her plans for a marriage between the Bonapartes and the Beauharnais, that she

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 148.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 181.

had no time to consult Hortense's likes and dislikes. The good Josephine " was the only person," says the duchesse d'Abrantès, " who did not seem to realize what a charming, attractive daughter she had. I will not say," she continues, " that she did not love her. God forbid that I should think such a thing ! And yet I can remember a number of little trifles, speeches, deeds, all sorts of things, in short, which showed that Josephine did not love her daughter Hortense as she deserved to be loved."[1]

Mme. de Rémusat confirms this opinion when she says : " Mme. Bonaparte and her daughter were good friends, but they were too unalike to understand each other. . . . These two women loved each other, but I don't think they ever understood each other."[2] Love, even love for little children, must be real, and not that indifference which goes by the name of love, it must be more unselfish than Josephine's affection for her child. The love of a mother for her daughter, her duties towards her, do not only consist of sending her to a fashionable school, of giving her sweetmeats, pretty clothes, and making her a sort of dressed-up doll which is warranted to say the proper things at the proper time ; still less do they consist of making use of her and sacrificing her to suit her mother's plans. The rôle of a mother, of a true mother, is quite different ; it is her duty to teach her children to be good, to teach her sons honour and her daughters modesty, for honour and modesty are the two foundation-stones of what people call a good education, and they ought to form the basis of our conduct

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 416.
[2] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 250.

through life. She ought to choose her daughter's friends, so that she may be able to give her young heart, still fresh and free from worldly taint, to the man of her choice who will promise to make her daughter happy for the rest of her life. But what can we expect of a woman who can neither see nor understand? Mme. Bonaparte considered her daughter's marriage in the same frivolous light in which she had considered her own. And yet we must do her this justice and confess that she was not alone. A true daughter of the eighteenth century, she, like most women of her time, was prejudiced and frivolous. Could one expect her to consult her daughter's wishes before tying those bonds which she, for one, did not hold very sacred and which a divorce, that useful institution created by the Republic, could easily break asunder? As for her affections, what, if you please, had affection to do in all this? She had found, or she thought she had found, a very good catch for her daughter in the person of Lucien; this plan drove all thoughts of her own divorce from her mind; she would have been much astonished if anyone had told her to ask her daughter's opinion first and to renounce her plan if it did not meet with that daughter's approval.

The fact is that Hortense did not care for Lucien. When, having ascertained the truth, Mme. Bonaparte turned her attention to Louis, she found that Hortense cared still less for the latter. And then we must not forget, as Lucien himself said,[1] "that she was very old for her age and that she had already had a great deal of experience," which seldom means happiness for the husband. The truth is that her affections were engaged

[1] Th. Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 268.

elsewhere. She saw the First Consul's young and brilliant aides-de-camp every day, often breakfasted and dined with them, played at prison-bars with them during the daytime and joined them in games of *reversi* in the evening, acted little plays and danced with them ; so it is not to be wondered at that one of these officers at last won her affections. It was General Duroc who was the happy man. Either on account of his naturally reserved nature or because he did not wish to betray the confidence which the First Consul had placed in him, or because he did not really care so very much for Hortense, Duroc seemed embarrassed by her attentions and did not respond to the advances of Mme. Bonaparte's charming daughter. That fact, however, did not prevent him keeping up a very regular correspondence with her. The First Consul perceived her fondness for Duroc, but he did not know all the details ; he thought it would be be a good idea to marry Hortense to Duroc. But Josephine, who did not consider that she would reap any personal benefit from this marriage, did not share her husband's views on the matter. She did everything she could to persuade him to give up the idea. As always, she tried to get Bourrienne to back her up ; but she was too late in the day. Bourrienne had heard the First Consul discussing this plan for a marriage between Hortense and Duroc ; in his desire to displease nobody, Bourrienne had promised to help the young people and, like a good friend to both parties, he did his best for them in every way. Duroc had been sent to Saint Petersburg to congratulate the emperor Alexander, in the name of the First Consul, upon his accession to the throne. " While Duroc was absent," says Bourrienne,

very indiscreetly, "the young lovers' correspondence, with their consent, passed through my hands; I used to play a game of billiards nearly every evening with Mlle. Hortense, who was a capital player. Whenever I whispered to her: 'I have got a letter,' she would immediately cease playing and run up to her own room, where I gave her the letter. Her eyes always filled with tears and she remained absent from the drawing-room, whither I had preceded her, for a long time. But nothing ever came of their friendship. Josephine wanted her to marry *someone in the family*, so that Hortense's husband could take the part of his mother-in-law against the *other members of that family*. When I perceived that she was quite determined and that nothing would make her alter her mind, I promised not to thwart her wishes, which I was obliged to allow were prompted by common sense; nevertheless, I begged her to observe that I could no longer keep silent during these little discussions, but that I must speak my mind. She seemed satisfied.

"These intrigues," continues Bourrienne, "did not cease during our visit to La Malmaison. I will omit all the details, for it was always the same story—the same scenes, the same irresolution. Matters were in this unsettled condition when we returned to the Tuileries. Duroc, however, seemed likely to win the day. When I congratulated him upon his success he thanked me rather coolly for my kindness. But Mme. Bonaparte managed to alter everything before many days had passed. Having set her mind upon marrying her daughter to Louis, she contrived, by dint of steering carefully, of teasing, coaxing and petting her husband, to get what she wanted. On January 4th, the First Consul came up

after dinner to the study where I was working and said :

" ' Where is Duroc ? '

" ' He has gone out. I think he is at the Opera.'

" ' Tell him, as soon as he returns, that I have promised to give Hortense to him ; he shall marry her. But I wish them to be married within two days at the latest. I will give her 100,000 francs (£4000), and I will give him the post of commander of the 8th division. He shall start with his wife for Toulon on the day after his marriage, and we will live apart. I will have no son-in-law in my house. As I want to have no more worry about the matter, let me know this very evening if he agrees.'

" ' I don't think he will agree.'

" ' Well, then, she shall marry Louis.'

" ' Will she consent to do so ? '

" ' She will have to ! '

" The First Consul gave me his orders in rather a brusque tone, which made me think that another family scene had just taken place and that it was because he was so weary of being teased and because he longed for peace that he had come to propose this sort of ultimatum. Duroc returned at 10.30 that same night. I repeated the First Consul's proposal word by word to him.

" ' *Oh ! if that's all you want to know, my dear fellow,*' said he, ' *he can keep his daughter. I'm off !* ' And with an air of indifference which I could not account for at that time, he seized his hat and rushed out of the room.

" The First Consul, before retiring to rest, was informed of Duroc's reply and Josephine was assured that her daughter should marry Louis ; in fact, the marriage took

place a few days later. This is the history of the marriage which was so distasteful to Mlle. Hortense, but which probably afforded Duroc some satisfaction. Louis had allowed other people to choose a wife for him. Hortense had hitherto avoided him as much as possible; her indifference for him was no less marked than his aversion for her. These feelings of indifference and aversion lasted to the end of the chapter."[1]

It was necessary to reproduce this long extract in order to show what influence Mme. Bonaparte still exercised over her husband in those days; for, as Bourrienne says, the mistress who reigned in that little boudoir in the Tuileries was often more powerful than the master of the house who sat dictating his commands in his study.[2] It was Mme. Bonaparte, in short, who prevented her daughter's marriage with Duroc.

"My daughter," said she, "can only marry a prince or a Bonaparte."

Although General Duroc cared really very little for Hortense, he was very angry when he learnt that Josephine opposed his marriage with her daughter, and he never forgave her.[3] However, he soon consoled himself for this disappointment, which had only wounded his vanity and not his heart. But we must confess that the behaviour of Mme. Bonaparte's daughter was rather peculiar; and the coolness with which she set the laws of propriety and good society at defiance and began and carried on a flirtation with one of her stepfather's aides-de-camp, who had by no means made up his mind to marry, is astonishing to say the least of it. We know

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. IV, p. 319–21.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 322.
[3] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. VI, p. 750.

that when Hortense was still almost a child, she had indulged in a flirtation with M. Charles de Gontaut, whom her parents dismissed from their service in order to prevent this little idyll ending in a marriage. We also know that a certain comte de Paulo, who was pardoned by an amnesty after the 18th *brumaire*, had made a great impression upon her and a still greater impression upon her mother; the First Consul had exiled the gallant to the province of Languedoc. Everybody knew these facts, and they made many a suitor think twice before asking for the hand of the fair Hortense. And then Mme. Bonaparte was very easy-going in this as in other matters: does not General Tercier tell us in his memoirs, that when he was a young, thoughtless, lighthearted fellow in Martinique, he never let an opportunity pass in which to amuse himself and that, as he was very intimate with the Tascher de la Pagerie family, he often spent several days at a time in their home and saw a great deal of her who later was to become the wife of the *homme des siècles*. "She was young in those days," he says, "as I was also. . . ."[1]

The editor of these memoirs who, in criticizing this little sentence, wisely puts a number of dots which leave a good deal to our imagination, says in his preface:

[1] *Mémoires politiques et militaires du général Tercier* (1770–1816), p. 15. An officer who happened to be in Martinique at the same time as Tercier, the comte de Montgaillard who, to tell the truth, was a fearful hand at backbiting, but whom we can believe on this occasion, for his evidence corroborates that of the truthful Tercier, says of Josephine, who was then only *thirteen* years of age . . . "she danced like a fairy, she was as affectionate as a turtle-dove, and so coquettish and so thoughtless, to say the least of it, that she even scandalized the other inhabitants of the colony—which is saying a great deal!" (*Souvenirs de Montgaillard*, p. 11).

" Tercier, during his eventful life, sometimes liked to evoke the memory of the impressionable Creole, whose heart he seems to have won for a time. . . . He was thus able to live those happy hours of love-making over again, when thoughtless youth gazes into the future and fancies that all is tinged with the roseate hues of happiness."

To return to Hortense, one thing is certain and that is that she did not like Louis, in fact, that he was even repugnant to her. Her mother, however, succeeded in making her accept him as her husband. As for Louis, if we believe Constant, " he, at the time of his marriage was deeply attached to a person whose name nobody has ever been able to discover."[1] But Joseph declared that Louis was very much in love with Hortense.[2] Lucien, in his memoirs, says the same thing. This, in fact, is what he said to Louis when the latter came to ask his advice: Josephine had made the same proposal to him which she had made a few days before to Lucien, and Louis had not been so insensible as his brother to the pretty Hortense's charms.

" I advised my brother," said Lucien, " to wait for another occasion; I told him that I had refused her proposal without, however, saying why I had done so. *The subject was too delicate to discuss.* It seemed to me that he had suspected what I myself knew to have been the case.

" In consequence of another request for a private

[1] *Mémoires de Constant*, Vol. I, p. 108. Cf. *Méneval*, Vol. I, p. 104–5.

[2] *Bourrienne et ses erreurs*, Vol. I, p. 276. " When Louis married Hortense he was very much in love with her; his letters prove this fact."

interview, I gave in to his wish to know more, in the hope that he would profit by the advice which he forced me, so to speak, to give him, although I felt that I might still be mistaken.

" He confessed that the same suspicion had occurred to him, that his friend Mme. F. . . . had told him to be on his guard, that his future happiness and, above all, his liberty, his authority as head of his own family, were at stake. In short, he swore that he would not marry, and I must confess that I was delighted to hear it for my poor brother's sake.

" But these promises came to nothing.

" Louis made a third attempt. I replied in rather an embarrassed tone.

" ' What can I do ? ' replied he, ' but . . . the fact of the matter is that I am in love with her.'

" ' You are in love with her ? The devil ! Then, what do you mean by asking my advice ? Forget all I have said, and all I recommended you to do. Marry her, and may God bless you ! '

" Louis was married a week later, on January 6th. The case was urgent."[1]

We must now contradict a rumour which Lucien seems to have believed all too easily, that the First Consul was Hortense's lover. Fouché also believed this report and he had the impudence to assert that it was Josephine herself who was the cause of this scandalous state of affairs.[2] Bourrienne, who is not always particularly just

[1] Th. Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 269.

[2] *Mémoires de Fouché*, Vol. I, p. 315. M. le comte d'Hérisson reproduces in the *Cabinet noir* some fragments of a manuscript by Mounier in which it was asserted that Josephine confessed to M. Capelle, the former lover of Elisa, Napoleon's sister, that her daughter Hortense

towards the man from whom he had received so many favours, contradicts these allegations.

He writes: "May the lie stick in the throat, as our brave ancestors used to say, of the dastardly scoundrel who would dare to assert that Bonaparte had any other feelings towards Hortense than those of a stepfather for his stepdaughter."[1] Mme. de Rémusat, who herself is not exactly fond of Napoleon (after having been over-fond of him perhaps) says: "The way in which the Emperor spoke of her proves that there was no truth in the scandalous reports which were circulated about her. He was always more careful of what he said when she was present; he frequently asked her to settle disputes between him and his wife."[2]

Constant, in his memoirs,[3] Mlle. Avrillon, the duchesse d'Abrantès, the wife of General Durand,[4] all contradict this rumour, which is certainly not confirmed by any other contemporary writers. Hortense has been justly blamed for her friendship (platonic, it is true), with Duroc, and we must also blame her for having obeyed her mother and for having married a man for whom she felt an aversion. She had already refused to comply with her mother's wishes when that mother had wanted her to marry the comte de Mun! During the first few months of her married life, her conduct, notwithstanding the fact that she had shed bitter tears on her wedding-day and on

had had a *liaison* with her husband. "I could scarcely believe this story," adds baron Mounier, "but it shows what Josephine thought or wanted other people to think of Napoleon" (*Cabinet noir*, p. 129).

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. IV, p. 322–3

[2] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 160.

[3] Constant, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 109.

[4] *Mémoires de Mlle. Avrillon*, Vol. I, p. 152. *Mémoires de la générale Durand*, p. 2. *Mémoires de la duchesse d'Abrantès*, Vol. VI, p. 342.

many subsequent days, was absolutely above reproach. Things were different later, but we must do her this justice: her training, her education, or rather her lack of education, although she had been brought up in Mme. Campan's boarding-establishment, was responsible in a great measure for this sad state of affairs; but the fault lay first of all with the mother; then it was her husband's fault, and finally it was her own.[1]

In the thoughtless, frivolous circle in which she lived, after having witnessed the terrible scenes which marked General Bonaparte's return from Egypt, when she heard her stepfather accuse her mother of such dreadful things —people are too fond of thinking that children have no memory—the poor, terrified daughter had a part to play in those angry scenes; she had had to intercede for her mother; although still scarcely more than a child, with a child's innocence and inexperience, must not those painful scenes have made her old before her time and driven away the last vestiges of her childhood? Did not that most necessary of all virtues, filial respect, receive a cruel blow that day? It was neither the frivolous life which she continued to lead, nor her mother's lukewarm or misguided affection for her, nor the lack of supervision, nor the mother's abuse of parental authority in trying to make her daughter marry a man she could not endure, which could help her to see life as it really is, to understand that we must learn to do without

[1] The grave Chancellor Pasquier, always so leni nt towards Josephine and Hortense, says in his memoirs: "Louis Bonaparte, who had married Josephine's daughter, had such a jealous disposition that he almost immediately began to suspect his wife of dishonourable conduct, which suspicions were soon justified by the far too free-and-easy manners of the woman who had been given to him for a wife."

things when we cannot satisfy our desires except at the risk of wounding other people's feelings. Women, as well as men, are what their mothers make them. How could Hortense have acted otherwise except she had been gifted with extraordinary virtues? People thought she was gifted because she happened to be cleverer than most of her mother's friends.

To return to Lucien's assertion that the case was urgent, this is an error which we could easily refute if we were not already morally certain that he was mistaken. M. Frédéric Masson has taken the trouble to do so. "Hortense's marriage-settlement was signed the 13th *nivôse, an* X (January 3rd, 1802); the marriage was celebrated the 14th *nivôse* (January 4th) and her son was born the 18th *vendémiaire, an* XI (October 10th, 1803). So the case was *not* urgent at the time of her marriage, as Lucien Bonaparte puts it, for her child was not born until two hundred and eighty days after the date of that marriage.

Now on the 18th *nivôse* (January 8th) the First Consul started at midnight for Lyons and he did not return to Paris until the 12th *pluviôse* (February 1st). These facts speak for themselves. . . ."[1]

[1] Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et les femmes*, p. 178.

CHAPTER II

Marriage of Hortense—Josephine begins to think—The First Consul dismisses some of his wife's friends—Josephine's grief—The *salon* of the Tuileries—M. de Talleyrand—The consular court is formed—A staff of honour is also formed—Etiquette is introduced—Mme. Bonaparte's maids of honour—Mme. de Rémusat—Reception at the consular court—Mme. Bonaparte and the royalists—The women of the *ancien regime*—Letter from *Monsieur*, the comte de Lille—An extraordinary ambassadress: the duchesse de Guiche—Breakfast at La Malmaison—Josephine is delighted to be allowed to negotiate—Reply of the First Consul—The duchesse de Guiche receives orders to leave Paris—Bonaparte is mistaken concerning Josephine's influence in the faubourg Saint-Germain—Mme. de Montesson—Family squabbles—Josephine's superstitions—Scene caused by a broken snuff-box.

THE First Consul started for Lyons, where he had to assist at the *Consulte*, or assembly of Italian delegates, immediately after his brother's Louis' marriage with Hortense. He had availed himself of the opportunity caused by this ceremony, which took place in the little *hôtel* in the rue de la Victoire, in order to have the marriage of his sister Caroline and General Murat, who had been married two years previously by the mayor of their *arrondissement*, blessed by the Church. It was noticed that the First Consul, whose case was similar to that of Murat, refrained from asking the Church to bless the civil marriage uniting him to Josephine. And this notwithstanding the tears of Josephine, who had begged him to consent to let their

marriage be sanctified by a religious ceremony. Her reasons for wishing her marriage with the First Consul to be blessed by the Church were not entirely caused by an overscrupulous conscience; she wanted him to give his consent, because she thought that a religious ceremony would enable her to keep her splendid position for ever and aye. Had the First Consul, in refusing to accede to her request, some idea that he might wish to divorce her on some future occasion, as he had already been on the point of doing on his return from Egypt, which divorce would have been rendered more difficult by a religious marriage? No one can tell, but this refusal was made the subject of much comment among his *entourage* and, above all, among Josephine's friends; in fact, all Paris talked about it.[1]

Meanwhile, this marriage seemed to have made Josephine anxious to find husbands and wives for all her male and female friends as if she, by so doing, could prevent her husband from divorcing her. She had already arranged a match for Lavalette; she was looking out for a wife for Méneval, and she was soon to find a suitable *parti* for M. de Talleyrand.

Hardly was the First Consul installed in the Tuileries when he found himself positively bombarded with business matters of every description. But he had to find time to arrange one matter, apparently unimportant, but in reality very important, in his new life: he had

[1] *Mémoires de Bourrienne*, Vol. IV, p. 316. *Mémoires du duc de Rovigo*, Vol. I, pp. 402–3. *Mémoires de Miot de Mélito*, Vol. II, p. 49: "It seemed to me that the First Consul, in refusing to comply with his wife's request when she begged him to insure the stability of their union by a religious ceremony, intended to keep this divorce as a weapon for a future occasion."

to organize his wife's *salon*. Mme. Bonaparte's circle of acquaintances in those days was more remarkable for its size than for distinguished manners; human wrecks of all sorts, ruined out-at-elbow aristocrats who had lost caste, newly-fledged millionaires, knights of the card-table, and candidates for the court of bankruptcy, adventurers picked up everywhere and anywhere, in the shady *salons* of such men as Barras, women who had been divorced seven or eight times, women living separated from their husbands, old beaux who used to go to the rue Chantereine but who never brought their wives with them—there were some of all sorts, but more bachelors, it was said, than married men. Mme. Bonaparte had not been particular, oh! no, whom she invited to her house when she was looking out for some good-natured, easy-going creature who would consent to marry her and take her away from the vulgar life of semi-respectability which she was then leading. Now that the husband, whom she had found just in the nick of time, had climbed to the top of the Republican tree, the whole pack of hangers-on took possession of her and meant to take possession of her house. But Bonaparte had no intention of allowing them to do anything of the sort.

The time was past when he used to go down on his knees to Josephine, when he was afraid to open his mouth to her lest she should fly into a passion; those days in Italy were long past and gone! He was now going to let them see that he was master in his own house. And whose fault was it? She had scorned her husband's love, she only wanted to be his friend. Well, she *was* his friend now, and she ought to have thought herself very lucky to have such a kind, indulgent, good-natured

friend. And then, he was doing her a good service by turning the whole pack of her friends out of his house, those friends who, he knew full well, brought dishonour to his home, blackened his character, sullied his name which was always in their mouths, and only did harm to the government at the head of which he had the honour to be. But he experienced some difficulty in making the final sweep; like many another husband, Bonaparte had some trouble to prove that he was master in his own house. Josephine was really fond of the rabble; she shed tears for the friends whom her tyrannical husband prevented her from receiving any more in her own home. But the First Consul was relentless; Mme. Tallien, notwithstanding her frequent "spells of modesty," found the door shut in her face when she came to see Josephine one day; Mme. Hamelin, who was the first woman to walk in the street clad in transparent garments, the high-priestess of the tribe of the *sans-chemises!*[1]

[1] Here we must contradict a story concerning Mme. Bonaparte. It was said that she was seen walking one day with Mme. Tallien in the Champs Elysées clad in transparent garments. An article in a newspaper, the *Petite poste ou le prompte informateur*, for the 3rd *messidor an V* (June 22nd, 1797), no doubt started this story, which was made the subject of a very pretty and very much-admired picture at one of our Salons about fifteen years ago. Here is an extract from the article in question: "Last Sunday was also a *décadi* and a religious *fête* into the bargain. Everybody hastened out to breathe the fresh air and to profit by a fine day following several wet ones. The Champs Elysées were filled with holiday folk attired in their best clothes. Two women alighted from a pretty *cabriolet;* one was decently attired, the other had bare arms and shoulders and wore nothing but a simple gauze petticoat over flesh-coloured tights. Before they had gone three paces, they were pushed and hustled by the crowd. The half-naked woman was insulted; some one tugged at her petticoat. . . ." It is quite possible that Mme. Tallien was one of these women, but her companion was certainly not Josephine, for Mme. Bonaparte was in Italy with her husband at that time.

found herself thrust outside; and the whole pack of male and female admirers of these shameless women whom his wife, with inconceivable indulgence, consented to call her friends, were shut out from his hearth and home! . . . Out they went! . . . But what tears were caused by this act! . . . Did the First Consul intend to reduce his wife to consorting only with respectable women? It was inconceivable! It was absurd! She should be bored to death! " She cried, she even blushed to think that she would be reduced to invite the wives of the principal functionaries belonging to the government, who were a set of frights, and each one duller than the other! "[1]

Josephine was fearfully angry with her husband for having had recourse, notwithstanding her tears, to this very necessary expedient; and she probably let him hear her opinion about the matter on more than one occasion, for Bonaparte said during the assembly of the *Conseil d'Etat* of the 5th *vendémiaire:* " Ought we not to add a clause to the law now being discussed that a woman shall not see any person of whom her husband does not approve? Women are always crying: 'You want to prevent me seeing people whom I like!' "[2]

But this was only an empty phrase on his part, provoked by Josephine's grumbling; for he was perfectly well aware that the little details of home life cannot be regulated by laws, but that the whole matter is comprised in one sentence: " The wife must obey her husband." The law forbids so many things, but can it prevent them?

[1] Th. Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 250.
[2] Thibaudeau, *Consulat*, p. 436.

MADAME TALLIEN

From an engraving in the collection of A. M. Broadley, Esq.

The First Consul found it neither a difficult nor a lengthy matter to fill the gaps in his wife's circle of acquaintances caused by his very justifiable severity. The Ministers were of course frequent visitors at the Tuileries. Those generals who were obliged to settle for a while in Paris or remain on duty there hastened to pay their respects. The soldiers of the *armée du Rhin*, who had never seen Josephine's *salon*, wanted to pay their first visit to the Tuileries; their brothers-in-arms belonging to the *armée d'Italie* were anxious to see it again. Those important functionaries, who are always ready to cringe to the powers that be, did not fail to put in an appearance. They brought their wives with them: nearly all these ladies were young and many of them were very pretty. Contemporary biographers observe that never had so many lovely women been seen together as at that time. Among them was Murat, sister to the First Consul, who had now been married some few months; Mme. Louis Bonaparte, still a bride; Mme. Maret, married only yesterday; "Mme. de la Rochefoucauld, a little hunchback, but an ingenious and very good-natured creature and related, I know not how, to Mme. Bonaparte; Mme. de Lavalette, gentle, kind-hearted and pretty notwithstanding the small-pox[1] and the opinion of certain persons who still thought her far too handsome, notwithstanding this malady, to suit their taste; Mme. de Lameth, who was as round as an india-rubber ball and bearded into the bargain, two facts fatal to female beauty, but good-natured and witty, two qualities which always become the fair sex; Mme.

[1] While M. de Lavalette was in Egypt as aide-de-camp to General Bonaparte his wife, who had remained in Paris, fell ill of the small-pox.

de Laplace, who, to please her husband, did everything, including her courtesies, according to the rules of geometry; Mme. de Luçay; Mme. de Lauriston, good, always gracious to her visitors and a favourite with nearly everybody; Mme. de Rémusat, a superior woman and very attractive to those who knew how to appreciate her; Mme. de Talhouët, who remembered too well that she had once been pretty and who could not remember that she was no longer so; Mme. d'Harville, who was rude on principle and only civil by accident. These were the women who frequented Josephine's *salon* at the time of the *preparatory consulate*, as I call the consulate of 1800–1801."[1]

When after the victory of Marengo and, six months later, after that of Hohenlinden, a portion of the *armées du Rhin* and *de l'Italie* returned to France, generals and colonels flocked in great numbers to the Tuileries. They were all young men. Most of them, looking forward, after a long series of wars, to an era of peace and calm, had married; their young wives helped to fill Mme. Bonaparte's *salon*. It was about this time that the First Consul "first assigned a place in the State to his wife."[2] And this place she filled to perfection; she always had a kind word ready for everybody, was extremely gracious and lenient towards certain shy heroes, the volunteers of 1792, the generals of 1800, who were only familiar with warfare and were less at their ease on the parquet of her *salons* when being stared at by a bevy of pretty women, than on horseback exposed to a storm of shot and bullets on the battlefield. Everybody praised her gracious

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Histoire des salons de Paris*, Vol. III, p. 332.
[2] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 175.

manners, her kindness; and the shy young women belonging to Mme. Bonaparte's circle of friends, many of whom were just fresh from boarding-school and still rather awed by their mamas' behests to behave well, tried to copy this perfect lady of the house who, after all, was nothing extraordinary, even a little vulgar perhaps; but we forgive so much to people occupying elevated positions! Really, no one would have recognized her; she was quite another Josephine, very proper and very staid!

The First Consul, speaking one day of the generals and officers of the army, had said:

"They owe their popularity to the fact that they now occupy the place once occupied by the old nobility."

Junot improved upon this remark when he said:

"Why, then, are all these nobles so jealous of our rise in the world? The only difference between us and them is that they are the descendants of an old race while we are the ancestors of a new race!" And, as if to confirm these words, all these upstart heroes and conquerors did their very best to forget the free and easy manners acquired in the street or in camp, thanks to certain ideas of equality fostered by the Revolution, and to assume or reassume, which they did without much difficulty, the polite manners and refined language of the old régime. When one is in Rome, one must do as the Romans do:

Mme. Bonaparte took the lead in everything at the Tuileries, but she was admirably assisted in her task by the Foreign Minister, M. de Talleyrand, well known for his astuteness, raillery, spitefulness—and impertinence on occasion—but whose exquisitely polished manners

and charming conversational powers made him very popular. But the *habitués* of the Tuileries were not the only persons who felt the influence of M. de Talleyrand; his self-assurance, his perfect manners, were imitated by all Paris and set the tone, not only at the *fêtes* which he himself gave, but also at those to which he was invited. People were not slow to copy this *grand seigneur* who, thanks to his knowledge of the world and its little ways and to his perfect manners, knew how to display his talents, those talents which have been overpraised but which he, as one of the most practical and matter-of-fact men who have ever existed, knew so well how to turn to account.

However, etiquette and ceremony were equally unknown at the Tuileries. At present Josephine had no ladies-in-waiting, but she was soon to have plenty. Several people, nevertheless, took exception at the luxury in which the First Consul lived and considered it excessive.

"He is playing at being king,"[1] said Mme. Permon, who had known Mme. Letizia ever since they were children together and who was the mother of her who was later to become the duchesse d'Abrantès; and the "king" had his court, although no one had as yet mentioned the word "court"; no one would have dared to do so, at least, not at the Tuileries where the court existed. The diplomatic corps which, since the dawn of the consular government and especially since peace had been concluded with Austria, had begun to increase in Paris, went regularly to the Tuileries. The consular court had grown considerably.

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 397.

MARSHAL LANNES
(From an engraving in Mr. Broadley's collection)

Among the most assiduous visitors was Mme. Regnault (de Saint-Jean-d'Angély) who had already figured at Mme. Bonaparte's court in Milan. "She was certainly a remarkably handsome woman, but her full face was much less striking than her profile, which was quite Grecian in type, with all the perfection and refinement belonging to that type of female beauty; neither I nor anyone else ever saw her except with her face turned on one side; she had probably studied this effect and so she always managed to let people see her face in profile."[1]

The First Consul only tolerated her presence for her husband's sake; for she had, either rightly or wrongly, the reputation of being a terrible flirt. And then there was Mme. Lannes, who, at that time, was in the heyday of her youth and beauty and who was as famed for her kind heart as for her gracious manners; Mme. Savary, the future duchesse de Rovigo, *née* de Faudoas, and distantly related to Mme. Bonaparte; she, too, was a very handsome woman; but unfortunately she was not content with her black hair and dark skin and, in her efforts to alter nature, she sometimes contrived to make herself look a perfect fright; she had a good figure, although she rather resembled an Aunt Sally when dressed up to go to a ball;[2] Mme. Mortier, who afterwards became the duchesse de Trévise, "was extremely gentle; she was so amiable and sweet-tempered that nobody who knew her could help loving her";[3] Mme. Bessières, who became duchesse d'Istrie, lively, good-natured, kind-hearted, pretty and very obliging, and a

[1] *Mémoires d'une inconnue*, p. 114.
[2] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Histoire des salons de Paris*, Vol. III, p. 333.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 333.

general favourite because people saw that she really wished to please."[1] Duroc, who married Mlle. Hervas soon after his marriage with Hortense had been broken off, came the following year to introduce his young wife to this brilliant court. As he was now *général de division* and grand marshal of the palace, one would have thought that his wife would have been on very intimate terms with the lady who reigned at the Tuileries; but Mme. Bonaparte did not like Duroc, so she included Mme. Duroc in her aversion for her husband, and this young woman received quite a different welcome from that accorded to her fellow-guests; Mme. Ney, the daughter of Mme. Auguié, formerly waiting-woman to Marie-Antoinette, and who had been, like most of these young women, educated with Hortense and Caroline at Mme. Campan's boarding-school; Mme. Marmont, daughter of the rich banker Perregaux; Mme. Junot, the future duchesse d'Abrantès—all these ladies came to enliven the little court with their youth, wit and charms.

The receptions given by the First Consul necessitated a certain amount of display and gave rise to the formation of a staff of gentlemen-ushers which, in those days, was considered a daring innovation. And there was something which made even a greater sensation and that was when people saw M. Benezech, councillor of State and formerly Secretary of State for the home department, appointed to direct that staff and to superintend things generally at the Tuileries. But people soon got accustomed to the idea, as they always do; and those who had cried loudest at this resurrection of the old giréme, were by no means the last to ask for positions

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Histoire des salons de Paris*, Vol. III, p. 334.

at the palace when some new posts were created at the consular and imperial court. Meanwhile, the First Consul's household, under M. Benezech's management, began to be quite celebrated. The foreigners who flocked to Paris from all parts of Europe after peace had been concluded, were often obliged to express their admiration and astonishment. Such awful tales anent the Revolution had been circulated in the different European courts, the *émigrés* had drawn such pictures of our civil discord and of our subsequent ruin, that people really expected to find Paris still just as she was in 1793 and 1794. These foreigners, on noticing the general state of calm in Paris, that the city was far from having been devastated (as certain persons had tried to make their neighbours believe), that the milliners' shops were just as crowded as in the most prosperous days of the reign of Louis XVI, and that the theatres were packed every night, could not hide their astonishment.

Society, however, took a long time to settle down into its old ways; there were several causes for this state of affairs; first of all, money was scarce. As very few *salons* were open as yet, people made a point of meeting one another at the theatre. Mme. Bonaparte passed every evening at the play with Hortense. After the piece was over—she very seldom waited to see the end, and she paid more attention to the actors than to the piece—she returned to the Tuileries and finished the evening with whist or, if there were not enough players, with a game of *piquet* with the consul Lebrun or Cambacérès. The wives of the First Consul's aide-de-camp, Mmes. Lannes, Savary, Mortier and Bessières, also came to keep them company. The same persons came every

day and played exactly the same games. As there was no regular court as yet, the wife of the First Consul could invite very few ladies; her husband feared that if she increased her circle of acquaintances, she would wound certain susceptibilities among the female portion of the diplomatic corps who, accustomed to luxury and to court etiquette, might not have treated the wife of the chief magistrate of the French Republic with all the respect they owed her: there are so many degrees of politeness and so many ways of saying and replying to pretty speeches.

The First Consul, fully alive to all these facts which the public did not realize, very soon perceived that M. Benezech was not competent to fulfil his duties—the duties of superintending and organizing the different ceremonies and *fêtes* which the First Consul, in his elevated position, was expected to give. So, in the month of March, 1802, Bonaparte decided to inaugurate the reign of etiquette at his court. From that day, etiquette was one of the chief factors, one of the agents of his system of government. The governor of the palace was General Duroc; it was this general's duty to attend to money matters, to the police, and to superintend things generally at the palace. At his table sat the officers, the aides-de-camp and the ladies-in-waiting. The First Consul's staff consisted of four generals commanding the consular guard: Generals Lannes, Bessières, Davout and Soult, and of eight aides-de-camp: Colonels Lemarrois, Caffarelli, Caulaincourt, Savary, Rapp, Fontanelli, an Italian officer, and Captain Lebrun, son of the third consul. There were four prefects of the palace: MM. de Luçay, Rémusat, Didelot, and Cramayel, and four

ladies of the palace : Mmes. de Luçay, Talhouët, Rémusat and Lauriston. One of the generals belonging to the consular guard waited on the First Consul every week at the Tuileries as well as an aide-de-camp and a prefect of the palace.

" The prefects of the palace had to manage the household, see that the rules of etiquette were not transgressed, and superintend all ceremonies. The ladies had to accompany Mme. Bonaparte ; it was these ladies' duty to present the wives of foreign ambassadors and others. One lady always waited upon Mme. Bonaparte every week. The prefects of the palace and the ladies-in-waiting were always present at any large receptions and court ceremonies.

" The officers who happened to be on guard at the palace always dined at the table of the general of the guard then on duty."[1]

The ladies of the palace had one official duty to perform, for they had to present the wives of the ambassadors to the wife of the First Consul ; but he who instituted this office probably chose them chiefly in order that they might act as a drag upon the thoughtless and inconsiderate creature to whom they had the honour to act as companions. He who later had Marie-Louise as vigilantly guarded as ever sultan had his favourites guarded by eunuchs was quite capable of conceiving such a plan.

The four ladies-in-waiting had been chosen, as we have already said, from among the nobility : in doing so, the First Consul had not only wished to please himself, and to suit his own political plans, but also he

[1] Méneval, *Mémoires sur Napoléon et Marie-Louise*, Vol. I, p. 121.

wanted to please his wife. He had chosen Mme. de Luçay for her wonderfully kind heart, and Mme. Talhouët for her reputation as a pretty woman ; he made an exception in the case of Mme. de Lauriston, but Mme. de Rémusat put them all in the shade with her ready wit, her well-developed intellect and her splendid education, seldom found among women and, above all, seldom seen at that time. Mme. de Rémusat was the great-niece of M. Gravier de Vergennes, who had been one of Louis XVI's Ministers. Her father, a functionary occupying a high position, perished on the scaffold in 1794. When Mme. de Vergennes became a widow, she devoted herself entirely to the education of her two daughters and, unlike most mothers, managed to develop their best qualities. She had known Mme. de Beauharnais prior to the Revolution. During the Reign of Terror, while hiding at Croissy, a little village near Paris, she met Mme. de Beauharnais, who had been released from the prison des Carmes after the 9th *Thermidor*. As both women had lost their husbands on the scaffold, both belonged to the inferior nobility and both had children about the same age, they found much in common and felt drawn towards each other ; and then, there is nothing like misfortune for bringing people together. They still continued to see each other after Mme. de Beauharnais' marriage with General Bonaparte ; and when the First Consul took up his abode at the Luxemburg and then later at the Tuileries, Mme. de Vergennes, who had had much experience during her life and was sharp-witted, was not behindhand in coming to congratulate her old friend upon her rise in the world. She brought her daughter with her, whom she had married, at the age of

sixteen, to M. de Rémusat, formerly attorney-general at the *cour des aides* of Provence.

The First Consul was perhaps most pleased to see Mme. de Vergennes and Mme. de Rémusat in his wife's *salon*; he probably enjoyed talking with Mme. de Rémusat more than with any other lady. His preference made the other women fearfully jealous of this charming young lady; but her superiority soon silenced all slander. With her pleasant face illumined by two beautiful black eyes sparkling with wit, intelligence and good-nature, thoughtful notwithstanding her youth and her naturally lively disposition, she was a brilliant example of what education can do when it is directed with intelligence; for it was entirely her mother's doing that her mind had been developed to such a state of perfection. Mme. de Rémusat was so well aware of this fact that she, in her desire to do good to everybody, wanted other people to profit by her own experience; she afterwards wrote a treatise upon education for women which is nothing but an outline of the system on which her own education had been based. And she was so convinced that children never forget in after years the principles learnt during their earliest years, that she devoted the few hours she could spare from her duties at the palace, and when the feeble state of her health allowed her to do so, to the education of her son. She even learnt Latin, that she might be able to teach him and help him with his studies and tasks. She soon reaped the reward of her industry; the pleasure, moreover, which she experienced in educating her son, amply rewarded her for her trouble, if we can use this term in connection with the occupation which affords us the

greatest pleasure in this world. At twenty years of age, Charles de Rémusat was already a very remarkable man, he became one of the greatest philosophers of the nineteenth century; he was Minister during the July government and the *Académie* was proud to include him among its members.

Mme. de Rémusat grew quite attached to Mme. Bonaparte; she became her devoted friend, and one could have wished that the mistress had followed the advice and had imitated the example of her lady-in-waiting in more ways than one. Mme. de Rémusat's sister, who married General Nansouty, one of the heroes of the wars of the Revolution and of the Empire, was also a woman of great merit.

The little consular court was scarcely formed when the ambassadors and their wives, as well as the distinguished foreigners who then happened to be in Paris, were received by the First Consul. "The reception took place in the suite of apartments belonging to Mme. Bonaparte situated on the ground-floor and looking on to the gardens of the Tuileries. Many people were present. All our neighbours' most charming women appeared decked out in a display of precious stones such as our young court had never seen before. The entire diplomatic corps assisted. At last there was such a crowd that the two *salons* on the ground-floor could hardly contain all the guests attracted by this huge reception. When all was ready, when everybody was seated, Mme. Bonaparte entered, preceded by the Foreign Minister, who introduced the foreign ambassadors to her. She then walked round the first *salon*, still preceded by the Minister, who named all the persons in turn as she

passed them. She was just going to pass through the second *salon* when the doors were suddenly thrown open and the First Consul appeared in the midst of this brilliant assembly. The ambassadors already knew him, but the ladies now saw him for the first time. They immediately rose from their seats and began to examine him with very visible signs of curiosity. He walked round the room accompanied by the ambassadors of the different nations, who followed one another in turn and introduced the ladies of their respective countries."[1]

This quotation from the memoirs of General Savary, who was then aide-de-camp to the First Consul, gives us a capital idea of the receptions at the Tuileries when Mme. Bonaparte shone in all the splendour of a beauty which was already fading, but which was much enhanced by an ever-increasing charm of manner. The First Consul now made it a rule to receive the ambassadors and their wives once a month in his wife's suite of apartments. Mme. Bonaparte loved to be present. She would sit down for a minute, while the First Consul engaged in a more or less lengthy conversation, and then she would retire after making a little courtesy.[2]

It was observed during the Italian campaign that General Bonaparte, either to suit his own ends or out of natural kindness, had been very lenient towards the *émigrés* who fell into his power. Mme. Bonaparte, for her part, while at Milan, had welcomed the wives of certain *émigrés* quite as kindly as she welcomed the wives of the officers and generals belonging to the *armée d'Italie*. And when once they had settled in the Tuileries,

[1] Duc de Rovigo, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 455.
[2] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 118.

they continued to treat the unfortunate *émigrés* with equal kindness. The First Consul first put a stop to all legal proceedings against them; he then encouraged, even invited them to get their names erased from the list of *émigrés;* furthermore, when the goods and estates belonging to those *émigrés* whose names had been erased from the list were still unsold, he had them restored to their rightful owners.

This proceeding immediately produced a perfect avalanche of petitions. Nearly all these *émigrés* had come to the end of their resources long ago; so their relatives and friends busied themselves with trying to obtain permission for them to return to France and recover their fortunes—or what remained of them. Mme. Bonaparte, having belonged in some measure to the old régime, and now, in the new order of things, apparently all-powerful, seemed to these unfortunate creatures and to their friends the very person to whom to address their petitions and to back their requests.

Naturally kind-hearted, Mme. Bonaparte exerted herself all the more willingly because she happened to have a particular weakness for the members of the old nobility; she also knew that, by helping them, she was furthering her husband's political plans. General Bonaparte, in short, wished to reconcile all the different parties in France; the readmission of the *émigrés* to their fatherland and the restitution of their goods, chattels and estates were part and parcel of his political programme and would, he hoped, lead to the pacification of all France.

If Mme. Bonaparte had been gifted with a more observant mind, she might have made a number of interesting remarks to herself. Many persons whom

she had never seen before and who applied to her as if she were an old friend, who would not perhaps have returned her bow if she had remained plain widow Beauharnais, now came to call upon her, loaded her with compliments and flattery and solicited all sorts of favours of her. Mme. Bonaparte promised to do whatever they wished, and the First Consul granted such requests as he considered it his duty to grant.

The royalist party was pacified for a time by these acts of kindness, which were natural to Bonaparte the man, but which were probably actuated by the First Consul's political aspirations. A sort of armed peace now began, a precursory state betokening either further hostilities or definite peace, rightly termed by Bourrienne : *a state of persuasion*. The royalists were endeavouring to circumvent Bonaparte's *entourage*, and flattered themselves that if once they could win that *entourage* over to their side, the First Consul himself would be circumvented and would treat with the brother of Louis XVI. They had no intention of giving him France and the throne which the Bourbons considered, by virtue of the principle of legitimate monarchy, their own property, their patrimony. It was against Mme. Bonaparte that the royalists directed most of their efforts, for they imagined, because it flattered their expectations to think so, that she had great power over her husband. Had not the woman who had implored her to intercede for them obtained the favours and pardons for which they begged ?

The royalists had decided to make use of some of these petitioners who, grateful or otherwise, had taken good care, as we can easily imagine, to go and thank her for

her kindness. Mme. Bonaparte had begged these ladies to come again and they had done so. But they mostly paid their visits to the Tuileries in the morning. Mme Bonaparte received them, together with her other visitors, in her apartments on the ground-floor, where they met the wives of the palace officials and the officers and generals attached to Bonaparte's staff ; but these women of the *ancien régime*, as they were called, who were trying to make Josephine work with them to help the Bourbons recover their power, seldom went up into the *salon* where the First Consul frequently sat.[1] They had to content themselves with dropping mysterious hints to the effect that if her husband would consent to prepare the way for the restoration of the monarchy and summon the Bourbons back to France when an opportunity occurred to do so, which opportunity could not be far distant, he might count upon the undying gratitude of King Louis XVIII and of all the Bourbons for him and his.

Among these female intriguers was a certain woman who, ten or twelve years before this date, had been within an ace of marrying the comte d'Antraigues ; the marriage, however, had not come off. Although she had married somebody else, become a widow and married a second time, she still kept on good terms with her old suitor. The latter, a revolutionist under Louis XVI and a royalist during the Revolution, had emigrated and had become a secret agent for the royalist party abroad. This woman kept up a political correspondence with him and told him everything she could learn : it amused her and kept her busy. She often mentioned Mme.

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. V, p. 140. Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 184.

Bonaparte in her letters; her curious remarks are worthy of reproduction. She shows Mme. Bonaparte "living day and night with her husband and cognizant of all his plans without, however, taking any real interest in them. A thoughtless creature, always ready to cry or giggle, at least she is a true friend to her relations and acquaintances; although she seems almost shy with her old friends, she spares no effort to obtain positions and advancement for them, and she is usually successful. She talks quite openly of the good old days when she was the little Beauharnais, and with all the ingenuous immorality of the Creole, speaks of Scipion de Roure or Cresnay[1] as her old lovers. She frequently indulges in a good grumble, as if her present elevated position dazed or tired her.

"Bonaparte, by dint of repeating things over and over again to her, has managed to drum one or two facts into her head. . . . She sometimes quite astonishes her audience by the things she says. . . . You think you are going to hear something really worth hearing, but you are quite amazed to find that she does not seem to understand what she is talking about. . . . One can tell her everything. . . . She has never been known to repeat anything to her husband."[2]

This is how a woman who often visited her and who, perhaps, obtained many favours, thanks to Mme. Bonaparte's intervention, speaks of her—and what she says is nearly always true!

[1] Cf. *Mémoires de Mme. de Rémusat*, Vol. I, p. 138: "Her reputation was seriously compromised." In 1791, Mme. de Beauharnais returned from Martinique in company with one of her *friends*, M. Scipion de Roure, a naval officer (*Lettre de d'Antraigues à Louis XVIII*).

[2] Léonce Pingaud, *Un agent secret sous la Révolution et l'Empire : Le comte d'Antraigues*, p. 267.

All the women of the *ancien régime* who visited at the Tuileries did not perhaps speak of Mme. Bonaparte in similar terms, and yet . . . But one and all tried to entangle her in the meshes of the royalist plots which they were weaving round her.

It was about this time that overtures were made to the First Consul from Mittau and London. *Monsieur*, the future king Louis XVIII, who then called himself the comte de Lille, wrote him a long letter which was handed to him by Lebrun, who had received it from the abbé de Montesquiou, the secret agent in Paris of the brother of Louis XVI. The comte de Lille asked Bonaparte point-blank to help him to recover the throne of his forefathers.

On receiving this letter the First Consul displayed great agitation. Josephine, who had heard either from her friends of the *ancien régime* or from Bourrienne, what the comte de Lille was going to do, begged the First Consul not to send a definite reply, but to let things bide for a time and not bind himself in any way. Hortense joined her mother in begging him to wait a little. M. de Vitrolles tells us that the First Consul was one day bantering the young Hortense, whom he called his little *Vendéenne*, about her royalist tendencies.

Hortense took her stepfather's sword in her little hand, saying to him :

" I know another sword which would suit you much better than this ! "

" What do you mean ? "

" I mean the sword of a high constable."[1]

The First Consul smiled, but this little remark made

[1] *Mémoires du baron de Vitrolles*, Vol. I, p. 30.

him wonder what his wife's friends were really up to. At last Josephine and Hortense worried him so that Bonaparte said :

" These obstinate women are absolutely crazy. The faubourg Saint-Germain has turned their heads : they both want to act guardian angel to the royalists. But they won't hurt me ; I bear them no spite."[1]

The First Consul had replied kindly to the comte de Lille's letter, but he had given the count to understand that he must not count upon his support if he wanted to place the royal crown upon his head, when the comte d'Artois, *Monsieur's* brother, thought he would be very clever and sent, not a letter to the First Consul, but a very strange ambassadress to Mme. Bonaparte.

This ambassadress was indeed an extraordinary one ; she was no other than the charming duchesse de Guiche, whose niece, Mme. de Polastron, was celebrated for her *liaison* with the comte d'Artois. It was hoped that her wonderful charm and personality, if they did nothing else, would insure more attention being paid to the negotiation then in hand. It was not a difficult matter for the duchesse de Guiche to get admitted into the presence of the First Consul's wife : her name was a master-key which would open all doors and, above all, Mme. Bonaparte's door. The latter, whom Mme. de Guiche found most favourably disposed towards her, so well had she been prepared by the women of the *ancien régime,* was delighted, even flattered by her visit. She invited her to breakfast at La Malmaison. The Bourbons were then mentioned. Mme. de Guiche told Josephine, who listened to her with all the ingenuous

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. IV, p. 76.

admiration of a little child for a grown-up person, that she had happened to be at the comte d'Artois' house only a few days ago, when somebody asked the prince what he would do for General Bonaparte if the latter were to give the throne back to the Bourbons ; and the comte d'Artois had replied :

" If he wished it, we would make him high constable and all the rest of it ; we would erect a magnificent column on the place du Carrousel surmounted by a statue of Bonaparte crowning the Bourbons."[1]

Since her marriage with General Bonaparte, Josephine had witnessed many important and glorious events ; she was nevertheless proud to think that she could play a part in a negotiation which she considered of the greatest importance : first, because she herself was concerned with it, and secondly because its object flattered her vanity in some measure, although she knew not why, and her fondness for the *ancien régime*. It had always been the dream of her life to appear at court, and so far this dream had never come true ; she was living another far more beautiful dream, although she knew it not ! If General Bonaparte accepted the Bourbons' terms, she would go to court ! people would even pay court to her ! So she was delighted to tell her husband all about her visit. " And the prince says," she added, " that he will erect a magnificent column with your statue on the top ! "

" And did you tell him," said Bonaparte, " that to do that, he would have to kill your husband and use his body as a pedestal ? "

The charming duchesse de Guiche received commands

[1] *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, Vol. I, p. 219.

to leave Paris that very same night. She was too pretty for Mme. Bonaparte, who was beginning to be jealous—and we must confess that her husband now and then gave her good cause to be so—to wish to intercede in her favour. The affair went no farther.

The Bourbons' endeavours to recover the throne of France, which they looked upon as their patrimony of which they had been cruelly defrauded, made the First Consul realize the necessity of winning the nobility over to his side; this was part of his system of conciliation and government. The nobles, whose interest it was to fall in with this plan, were fairly quick to grasp the First Consul's meaning, and it did not require much pressure to make them go over to his side. In this matter, Josephine was naturally very useful; but Bonaparte thought she had more influence than was really the case. He had really thought, when he married General de Beauharnais' widow, that he was marrying into one of the first families in France. "The circumstances attending my marriage with Mme. de Beauharnais," said he later, "put me in touch with a party whose aid was absolutely necessary to me if I wanted to carry out my scheme of coalition, one of the strongest points in my system of government and one of its chief characteristics. Without my wife's help, I could never have had any friendly intercourse with this party." Bonaparte is mistaken in this matter; it was either an intentional error, or else he spoke thus in order to make posterity think that Josephine had had a larger share in his success than was really the case. Had he married an innkeeper's daughter, as Lucien did, his system of coalition would have been just as successful as if Josephine had been his wife. The nobles made

advances to him because they wanted to make use of him, because they had always been accustomed to cringe before a master—and enjoyed it, too[1]—and not because he had married Mme. de Beauharnais. He perceived this fact when M. de Narbonne loyally rallied round him and opened his eyes to the real intentions of the French nobility. It was this same comte Louis de Narbonne, who was perhaps the most witty man of his day and certainly one of the bravest, who, having occasion one day to hand a letter to Napoleon whose aide-de-camp he had become, presented it to him on the brim of his hat, which called forth rather a cruel remark from his master :

" Certainly there is nobody like a noble for knowing how to wait upon one ! "

A certain number of persons belonging to those families who were called the *faubourg Saint-Germain* from the *quartier* in which they lived, seemed anxious to rally round the new régime or rather round the person of the First Consul. Several well-known aristocrats were even remarked; among others we must mention Mme. de Montesson. This woman, a relic of the *ancien régime*, was very intelligent, but intriguing beyond all bounds, and so careless of her reputation that she positively trampled the laws of decency under foot. As the widow of the marquis de Montesson, who died a lieutenant-general, she had secretly married the duc d'Orléans, the father of Philippe-Egalité—" with the left hand," adds the duc de Rovigo, very spitefully.[2] Her house, " where

[1] Napoleon later said a cruel and rather unjust thing concerning the nobles : " I opened the ranks of my army to them and not one of them would come ; I threw open my house to them and they rushed in in crowds."

[2] Duc de Rovigo, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 364.

decency was well-nigh forgotten,"[1] had been a favourite resort for all the dissipated men and giddy-brained women of the time. Mme. de Montesson was very intimate with Mme. de Beauharnais, who gaped open-mouthed with admiration at the arms of the d'Orléans family painted together with the *marquise's* own arms on the panel of her carriage. Arrested during the Terror and saved, like her friend, by the 9th *Thermidor*, they had always kept up with each other. The old *marquise* even went to breakfast sometimes with Mme. Bonaparte at the Tuileries. The First Consul loaded her with tokens of his respect; he took more pains to be polite to her than he had ever been known to take for any other woman. The duchesse d'Abrantès says that he seemed to think Mme. de Montesson, the widow of the duc d'Orléans, of quite as much consequence as if she were a princess of the blood royal of France![2] Certainly the care which the First Consul took of this old intriguer confirms this report; but Bonaparte was not a man to waste his admiration upon a person from whom he could expect no return. He was mistaken as to Mme. de Montesson's influence over the faubourg Saint-Germain, whose good-will he wished to gain; but his amiability and his little attentions were intended less for the old lady than for the noble *faubourg*. According to his brother Lucien, the First Consul considered Mme. de Montesson an authority in the science of etiquette, and he intended to make use of her when he began to revive at the Tuileries the customs and rules of etiquette of the old court. Lucien, who still shows signs in his memoirs of his old bitterness against his

[1] M. de Talleyrand, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 49.
[2] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Histoire des salons de Paris*, Vol. II, p. 102.

brother Napoleon, adds that "the real reason for Mme. de Montesson's popularity was that she had once said to Josephine: 'Don't forget that you are the wife of a great man!'"[1] Be this as it may, Mme. de Montesson was a favourite with the First Consul, who restored to her the annuity of 60,000 livres which the duc d'Orléans had bequeathed to her and which the Revolution had confiscated.

Although Bonaparte was beginning to gain the good-will of some individuals and even of some of the families belonging to the faubourg Saint-Germain, he was, on the other hand, not only loved—the term is not strong enough—but positively adored by the Parisian populace. And yet his life was constantly threatened by conspiracies. In order to protect himself from the unpleasant consequences of these conspiracies, he had formed his consular guard, commanded by General Lannes, and he had appointed General Junot, who was quite fanatical in his devotion to his master, to be governor of Paris. So his mind was easy on that point. But he was much annoyed by family squabbles. The First Consul, during a fit of temper aroused by his brother Lucien, who had been blaming him for something or the other, even went the length of saying:

"Look here! I will crush you as I crush this box!" So saying he flung a gold snuff-box, in the cover of which was a miniature of Josephine painted by Isabey, on the floor. The box was not broken, owing to the fact that the floor was carpeted, but the portrait fell out of the cover. Lucien picked up the box and the portrait and presented them to his brother, saying in an impudent tone:

[1] Th. Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 250.

" What a pity ! You've smashed the portrait of your wife instead of breaking my original ! "

Mme. Bonaparte, who heard of this incident, became very uneasy when she was informed that her portrait had fallen out of its frame.

" Oh ! " cried she ; " it's all over with me ! 'Tis a sign that he is going to divorce me. Bonaparte will tear himself away from me, as my portrait has been torn from the lid of that snuff-box ! "

" Josephine," wrote the princesse de Canino, Lucien's widow, " like most Creoles, was very superstitious. A that time she was continually assailed with fears lest the First Consul, in his desire to have a son, which desire he knew she was unable to fulfil, should divorce her. He had already talked of it on his return from Egypt, not because she had given him no children, but because she had misconducted herself.

" About the time the snuff-box was broken, Josephine, who firmly believed in Mlle. Lenormand, the already famous fortune-teller whom she had helped to make fashionable, went to consult her.

" She proposed to cover the portrait, which had been so nearly ruined, by another exactly similar, also painted by Isabey." And the princesse de Canino adds : " We are told that the snuff-box with its double portrait now belongs to the duchesse de Bragance, the empress's granddaughter by her father Eugène de Beauharnais, who was made prince of Leuchtenberg."[1] In 1819 and 1820, Queen Hortense, while staying with her mother-in-law, Mme. Letizia, in Rome, related how Mme. Bonaparte had been terrified by this insignificant incident.

[1] Th. Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, Vol. II, pp. 178, 179.

CHAPTER III

La Malmaison—Josephine's indolence—Improvements at La Malmaison—Mme. Bonaparte grants audiences—She chooses her *protégés* without displaying much discernment—Shady speculations, —Josephine's tears—A letter of introduction to Mme. Bonaparte—Mme. Hulot visits La Malmaison—Anger of the First Consul—Charming domestic scene—An incident with a dwarf—Bonaparte loves to play tricks—Josephine does not relish his tricks—Theatre of La Malmaison—Josephine has a fright—A false alarm—Excursion to Butard—Bad temper—Josephine's extravagance—Thirty-eight bonnets in one month!—Mme. Bonaparte dares not confess her debts—Thievish tradespeople—The First Consul's grief at his wife's extravagance—Josephine's dresses—Mme. Bonaparte is always short of money.

THE winter passed quickly. With the return of the fine weather, the First Consul, who was very fond of La Malmaison, went to stay there. This visit gave Mme. Bonaparte much pleasure; and yet the life she led there was rather monotonous. The First Consul passed all the moments not devoted to business at his wife's side; but those moments, which were few and far between, were mostly spent at table and we know that General Bonaparte did not like to sit long over his meals. When bedtime came, Mme. Bonaparte used to follow her husband to their bedroom, when the general got into bed and Josephine took a seat at the foot of the bed and read aloud to him for some time. She read well, and Bonaparte preferred to hear her read to anybody else. But what a lazy life she led during the daytime! Although she changed her

costume five times a day, she could not find enough occupation to keep her busy during the rest of the day. She did nothing most of the time! She received many visitors and strolled all over the park, but that was all. She often went beyond the park, which she found dull notwithstanding its charm and beauty. And although Bonaparte did not like her doing so, she frequently went with Hortense, who shared her mother's tastes, to walk in the dusty highroad and watch the carriages and the passers-by. Sometimes she sat down at her embroidery-frame, but she worked listlessly without really enjoying "the work, three-quarters of which were done by Mlle. Dubuquoy who, I am strongly inclined to believe," says Mme. d'Abrantès, "only persuaded her to do the work because she told her that Marie-Antoinette had been very clever at this sort of needlework."[1] Then, after putting in a few stitches, she would tire of her embroidery and go and sit down to her harp. Lack of perseverance had prevented her excelling in this accomplishment, for she could never do anything for long at a time. She had never managed to learn more than one tune and she played that air whenever she took her harp into her husband's study. But she tired of music as quickly as she tired of her embroidery. "She had no accomplishments; she did not draw, neither was she musical."[2] So in her boredom she busied herself, not so much because she loved luxury and spending money as because she had nothing to do, with making improvements in the park; she had ponds made which she filled with goldfish, with flocks of wild-fowl and different

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 402.

[2] Méneval, *Mémoires sur Napoléon et Marie-Louise*, Vol. III, p. 11.

species of swans; she also had some magnificent conservatories built. All these works were undertaken with the consent of the First Consul, who, in company with Josephine, sometimes went to watch the workmen and see how they were getting on. But to Josephine's despair, "Napoleon had a gun in his study with which he constantly stood at the window and shot the rare fowls which she kept in the ponds of her park."[1] Like all young Corsicans who do not know how to amuse themselves in their island and who pass their time in breaking and spoiling the benches and trees in the public gardens of Bastia, Bonaparte, notwithstanding his superhuman labours, felt the need of destroying something; he was always cutting and slashing the arm of his chair or the leather on his writing-table with his penknife: as we can easily imagine, this mattered little to his wife, but she was really grieved when she saw that her husband was possessed with such a mania for destruction that he could never enter her hot-houses at La Malmaison without cutting down or uprooting one of the valuable plants which were growing there."[2]

But as nothing ever made a very lasting impression upon this thoughtless mind, especially when it was a disagreeable thing, a new visitor soon put everything else out of her head. For Mme. Bonaparte, notwithstanding her husband's express commands that she was not to do so, granted audiences, signed petitions, pleaded for her *protégés*, and interested herself in everybody and everything which were brought to her notice; but this interest was only feigned, was only the result of a wish

[1] Chaptal, *Mes souvenirs sur Napoléon*, p. 334.
[2] *Ibid.*

to be polite, and so it was of short duration ; hardly had the petitioner turned his back, when she forgot her promises. This kindness, which has been so often praised, was too general to be anything more than amiable indifference. Mme. Bonaparte accorded her protection to everybody who asked for it, and took a certain amount of interest in any and all sorts of matters ; and this she did without examining into the circumstances of the case and without exercising any discrimination or discernment.

The First Consul often reprimanded her, quite severely sometimes, for meddling with things which did not concern her ; but he was only wasting his time. People had only to make a fresh attempt and to ask for a letter of recommendation, and she gave it as willingly and as thoughtlessly as if her husband had never forbidden her to do so.

This willingness to give her support was soon known, and unscrupulous persons were not wanting who tried to profit by it.

Bourrienne, like Josephine, was always hard up and short of ready money ; he was always getting implicated in shady transactions ; and, without letting Josephine see what he was about, he often made use of her complaisance in order to push his speculations, which were usually of a very doubtful nature. One day somebody came to ask Mme. Bonaparte kindly to draw the attention of the War Office to a man who offered to supply the army with several thousand horses at a much lower price than that which was usually paid for horses for the army. It seemed a good bargain ; the horses doubtless were not so good, but at all events the War Office

could not be expected to know this. Neither did Josephine know this fact, neither did she know what was hidden beneath this transaction which seemed so advantageous and of which Bourrienne spoke so highly. And then how could this speculation be otherwise than good, since the man who offered to sell the horses had, out of gratitude for the service which he was thus allowed to render the State, begged through Bourrienne for permission to offer Mme. Bonaparte a beautiful jewel, with a request that she would accept it as a souvenir of this service? Josephine was good-natured enough to do what was requested of her. But the First Consul was unkind enough to refuse to have anything whatever to do with the transaction, which would have benefited everybody except the army and the State. He had recognized the hand of Bourrienne in all this. Josephine had thought that she was doing quite right to interest herself in the matter: she was scolded by her husband without knowing exactly why; she wept copiously and dried her tears with the same ease with which she had shed them.

On another occasion, when she was asked to give a letter of introduction, she did not shed tears, but she made several people laugh heartily; however, the young man who was the hero, or rather the victim, of the adventure was very far from laughing. The story goes as follows:

A certain Creole lady, Mme. d'Houdetot, a friend of Mme. Bonaparte, had a brother named M. de Céré. As she wished to make her friendship with the wife of the First Consul of some use to her brother, she spoke very highly of him and obtained a mission for him. He had to go to Bordeaux and to return as soon as he had de-

livered his message ; he was given a certain number of days to go there and back. M. de Céré was to be made aide-de-camp to the First Consul if he accomplished his mission satisfactorily. M. de Céré was young, handsome, and had very good manners ; but he was rather given to flirting. He departed, fulfilled his mission at Bordeaux, but was so imprudent as to forget to return to Paris and give an account of himself until a fortnight after he ought to have done so. General Bonaparte was furious. The amiable Josephine even said rather tartly to Mme. d'Houdetot, who had come to try and explain matters :

" It's his own fault ! Why did he stay away so much longer than he need have done ? His friends can do nothing for him now."

Poor M. de Céré felt very crestfallen and bitterly regretted his little escapade. His heart sank when he saw the brilliant group of officers pass by on horseback escorting the First Consul. At last, after several months had elapsed, thinking that his little peccadillo had been forgotten, he begged his sister to mention his name again to Mme. Bonaparte. Mme. d'Houdetot returned to La Malmaison.

" Certainly he may come," said Josephine ; " let your brother bring his petition to-morrow. I will give it to the First Consul and I will speak for him."

M. de Céré was delighted. On the morrow, just as he was descending the stairs with his petition in his pocket, he met his tailor bringing him his little bill. He told the man that he would look over it, and then he stuffed it into his pocket together with the petition. He jumped into a hackney-coach and reached La Malmaison radiant with hope. Mme. Bonaparte, as always, was as gracious

and charming as possible. She took the petition from him and promised to do her very best to back it. The young fellow was overjoyed. He already fancied he could see himself clad in the beautiful uniform of aide-de-camp to the First Consul; he thought of nothing else during the rest of the day. He even had serious thoughts of ordering the uniform. But this reminded him of his tailor.

"Let us see what I owe the thief," said he. And, thrusting his hand into his pocket, he drew out—the petition to the First Consul! He had given Mme. Bonaparte the tailor's bill!

The poor fellow passed an awful night. As soon as day broke, he went to relate his adventure to his friends. They all with one accord advised him to return to La Malmaison and to confess what had happened; Mme. Bonaparte was so kind-hearted, she would be only too delighted to repair this unlucky blunder. But what a nuisance for M. de Céré! At last he plucked up courage to return to La Malmaison. Hardly had Mme. Bonaparte set eyes upon him, when she held out her hand to him:

"How glad I am!" said she to him; "I gave your petition to the First Consul. We read it together. It was just the thing!" she added, smiling with an air of approbation; "it made a great impression upon him. He told me that he was going to mention it to Berthier, and that all would be arranged before another fortnight had elapsed. . . . I assure you, my dear, that this success —for I consider the matter as good as settled—made me feel the happiest person in the whole world yesterday."[1]

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 280.

The poor young man could not get over the shock. He saw that it was all up with him and that Mme. Bonaparte had determined not to take any more trouble about him. He really deserved such treatment for his carelessness. But he could not help admiring the facility with which this excellent woman said exactly the contrary to the truth while taking all the credit for a good deed which she had not even tried to accomplish. For when she saw that she was worrying her husband, she always refrained from saying anything more—which was quite right of her to do and showed her good feeling.

However, she still continued her foolish habit of accepting invitations from everybody and anybody, and one day the First Consul had to remonstrate very severely with her because she had breakfasted with Mme. Devaisnes ; not that this woman was not perfectly respectable and much esteemed, but because Josephine had not told her husband what she was going to do. As he knew that " Mme. Bonaparte was in the habit of receiving anybody who came to call upon her,"[1] he never allowed her to accept any invitations without first obtaining his consent. This " habit of receiving anybody who came to call upon her," caused him a good deal of annoyance on more than one occasion. The following incident is recounted by Bourrienne and by Mme. d'Abrantès.[2]

When General Moreau's wife heard in Paris of the victory of Hohenlinden, she went to the Tuileries. But she was told that she could not be received. She called a second time and was again unable to see Mme. Bonaparte. The third time she came with her mother, Mme.

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. IV, p. 457.

[2] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. IV, p. 250. Mme. d'Abrantès, *Histoire des salons de Paris*, Vol. III, p. 345–7.

Hulot. After waiting for a long time, the ladies withdrew in high dudgeon—and we must allow they had good reason to be so! Mme. Hulot could not conceal her anger and said aloud before several other persons who were waiting their turn to be admitted, that "the wife of the victor of Hohenlinden ought not to be kept waiting like that, and that the *Directeurs* would have treated her more politely."

This speech reached the ear of the First Consul and made him very angry.

"What!" said he, "does Mme. Hulot regret the good old days of the *Directoire* because the head of the State has no time to spare from his important task in order to gossip with women-folk?" . . .[1]

Mme. Hulot went to La Malmaison some time after this incident; she came to ask that her eldest son, who was in the army, might be promoted to a higher post. Mme. Bonaparte received her most kindly, promised as usual to do everything she was asked to do, and made her visitor stay to dinner. But the First Consul had not forgotten the speech uttered by Mme. Hulot while waiting in the *salon* of the Tuileries; neither had he forgotten that Mme. Hulot, while at La Malmaison on a previous occasion, had dared to make "some bitter jests concerning a scandalous report which had been circulated about himself and his young sister Caroline."[2]

He looked very severe when he caught sight of her, hardly opened his mouth during dinner and turned his back upon her as soon as the meal was over. Mme. Hulot saw quite well that General Bonaparte did not like her

[1] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 192.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 192.

being there ; she took it into her head that he was jealous of her son-in-law Moreau. As for Josephine, she tried to smooth matters by explaining :

" Bonaparte[1] is so busy ! . . . He is expecting the courier, who is late, and, as you can see for yourself, he can think of nothing else ! "

Now the truth of the matter was that Bonaparte was not expecting any courier ; but he did not like Mme. Hulot, who was jealous and ambitious and kept her daughter in order, who, in her turn, kept her husband in order and made him believe all she wanted him to believe. General Moreau was a very weak creature and allowed his wife and his mother-in-law to keep him in leading-strings. These two women were responsible, not only for the stupid and wicked conduct which got him into prison, but also for his treason when he returned from America in order to take up arms against his fatherland.

" Mme. Hulot and her daughter," the First Consul used to say, " are Moreau's bad angels : they encourage him to do wrong ; they are responsible for all his faults."

Is that not always the case when a man only does what his wife tells him, or allows him to do ? Be this as it may, Bonaparte bore Josephine a grudge for having made him dine in company with General Moreau's mother-in-law ; but Mme. Bonaparte excused herself so charmingly that the First Consul took her in his arms, kissed her three or four times on the forehead and on the eyes, and did not let her go until he had pinched her ear very hard. Josephine uttered a little cry of pain and ran to the other end of the room ; but she returned almost immediately, put one arm round her husband's neck and

[1] She always called her husband Bonaparte.

laid her head on his shoulder with all the charming grace of a kitten when it wants to be noticed. Napoleon smiled with delight. Mme. Hulot would have been much astonished to learn that she was the cause of this charming little display of family affection.

Mme. Bonaparte was overjoyed whenever some unexpected incident, small though it might be, came to break the monotony of her daily life, a monotony which she really enjoyed, after all, and which was admirably suited to her lazy Creole nature with all its mental and physical indolence. The most interesting part of the day for her was when any milliners or jewellers came to show her their new " creations " ; she bought everything they showed her.

One day, however, a basket was shown to her the contents of which she did not buy, much as she would have liked to have done so : there was something so inexpressibly funny in that basket ! . . . but it was not for sale.

She went, followed by a gentleman-usher carrying the mysterious basket, and knocked at the door of the First Consul's study. The gentleman-usher entered, placed the basket on the table and then discreetly withdrew.

" What is the meaning of all this ? " asked Bonaparte.

Josephine, with an expression on her face as if she were a little girl going to give her parents a pleasant surprise, lifted the cloth which covered the basket ; whereupon the general beheld a miserable little object, a dwarf, struggle to its feet with great difficulty, prop itself up by the handle of the basket, and then proceed to blink at the First Consul and Josephine with its weak, bleary eyes. It was piteous to see this poor abortion,

whose brain was evidently as undeveloped as its body and who only seemed capable of suffering. What a contrast to the man whom Nature had endowed with all her most precious gifts and to whom life had given all that is best and most necessary for the satisfaction of ambition! But perhaps Josephine did not notice the difference! The sight of the dwarf amused her as much as that of some strange animal, or some rare and valuable jewel. But Bonaparte could not bear to look at it. He said nothing, only begged his wife to take the poor creature away, for it pained him to see it looking at him.

If Bonaparte did not appreciate his wife's silly pleasures and amusements, Josephine, in her turn, did not display much enthusiasm for her husband's little jokes. Bonaparte, it is true, was rather rough; but were the tricks and pranks of M. Charles which, only a few years ago, had so delighted Josephine, any more witty?

One day the First Consul invited several generals to breakfast at La Malmaison. During the repast, General Bonaparte took it into his head to ask his guests to shoot in the park; whereupon Mme. Bonaparte became much agitated.

"What?" cried she, "shoot at this time of the year? What are you thinking about? All the animals are with young; it is not the season for shooting!"

"Oh! well," replied the First Consul rather roughly, "I see we must give it up. Everything is prolific here except Madame."[1]

Another day, also at La Malmaison, the First Consul happened to be in very good spirits. The weather was splendid, so he had dinner served in the garden under

[1] *Mémoires du comte Dufort de Cheverny*, Vol. II, p. 430.

some tall trees at the top of a little mound to the left of a field in front of the *château*. Josephine had powdered her hair that day, a fashion which suits women who are no longer in their first youth and which suited her to perfection. But the general did not like powder, not that sort of powder, at least; so he began to tease his wife. What he said was not very unkind: he told her that she could now play the part of the comtesse d'Escarbagnas.[1] This joke, which was neither very witty nor very unkind, did not please Mme. Bonaparte, who made a wry face.

"Well, what's the matter now?" said the First Consul. "Are you afraid that you will be short of admirers? Here's M. le marquis de Carabas[2] ready to offer you his arm." This was Junot, thus called by Bonaparte on account of his fondness for amateur theatricals. Junot smiled at his general's joke; the First Consul then continued. He lifted his glass, looked at his wife, bowed and drank, saying:

"To the health of Mme. la comtesse d'Escarbagnas!"

Poor Josephine's eyes immediately filled with tears, which Bonaparte saw. In order to smooth matters, he turned towards Mme. Junot, bowed and, lifting his glass, said:

"To the health of Mme. la marquis de Carabas!"

Whereupon Mme. Junot burst out laughing; everybody did the same, and Mme. Bonaparte imitated their example.

"But I could see that she was hurt," says Mme. d'Abrantès, in relating this little anecdote; "I was only

[1] The chief female character in the comedy of that name by Molière.
[2] Another character in the same play.

sixteen years of age at the time, whereas she was forty."[1]

Acting was one of the chief amusements at La Malmaison. The First Consul liked to see pieces performed by people he knew; he thoroughly enjoyed these impromptu performances, for they enabled him to rest and to forget his work for a while.

"On Sundays small balls took place, when the First Consul used to indulge his fondness for dancing,"[2] and, besides these balls, a dinner-party was given every Wednesday. Both balls and dinners were usually followed or preceded by a little play performed in the theatre belonging to La Malmaison. Mme. Bonaparte, like the First Consul, thoroughly enjoyed these performances. On such occasions, there were always a number of persons present; delicious refreshments of all sorts were served, and Mme. Bonaparte did the honours of these private but largely attended receptions with so much amiability that each guest thought that he or she had been made the object of Josephine's special attention and departed quite content.

All these entertainments enlivened the *château* of La Malmaison, and the highroad between Rueil and Paris was continually crowded with carriages passing to and fro. But, notwithstanding all this coming and going, the road was far from safe. Some quarries which the First Consul later had closed or bricked up, served as shelter to a number of beggars and thieves. General Junot and his wife, while returning from Paris towards nightfall one day, were nearly set upon by some individuals who,

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 89.
[2] Méneral, *Mémoires sur Napoléon et Marie-Louise*, Vol. I, p 138.

probably thinking that their carriage was that of General Bonaparte, had thrown a bundle of faggots under the horses' feet in order to make them fall. Mme. Bonaparte, whose waiting-women did not fail to relate all the gossip about thieves and brigands they could get hold of, lived in a state of continual terror. One day she had a terrible fright. The park of La Malmaison was enclosed on the road side, as is still the case, by a ha-ha which anybody could climb over ; indeed, the country-people often did climb over in order to see what was going on in the park. On that particular occasion, Mme. Bonaparte was walking along the ha-ha with Mme. de Lavalette while the First Consul was playing a game of prison-bars on the lawn with Hortense, Bourrienne, Didelot, the general and Mme. Junot, Eugène and several intimate friends. Mme. Bonaparte and her companion had reached the breast-high balustrade which enclosed the park on that side, when they caught sight of two men who were watching the game from afar. Mme. Bonaparte, rather uneasy, sent Mme. de Lavalette to fetch her husband or somebody else, and took the arm of Mme. Junot, who had just joined them.

" Do you want something, *citoyens ?* " she asked, trembling in every limb.

" Oh ! no, *citoyenne.* We were only looking on. Can't we stand in the field and watch ? "

" Dear me, yes, of course ! " replied Mme. Bonaparte ; " but——"

" Ah ! I see, we are watching the First Consul ? 'Tis a strange sight to see the chief magistrate of the Republic amusing himself like one of the poorest *citoyens.* . . ."

At that moment General Rapp, whom Mme. de Laval-

ette had met, appeared on the scene and asked the two men who they were and what they wanted. They were two brothers, honest fellows, the eldest of whom had served in a *régiment des guides* and had even lost an arm in Italy; he had taken the liberty to come and introduce his brother to his former general that he might be allowed to enlist in the same regiment. Having heard this explanation, General Rapp took the two honest fellows to Bonaparte; he and Eugène, who was a colonel in a *régiment des guides*, made much of them and the French Consul drank with them to the future victories of the new recruit.

However, Mme. Bonaparte had been so frightened by the sight of these two men that nothing could calm her. Ceracchi's attempt and the affair of *nivôse* were of sufficiently recent date to justify her fears. In short, that same night, after her guests had returned to Paris, the inhabitants of La Malmaison began to talk about these attempts with which everybody was thoroughly familiar; naturally they then began to tell each other stories of brigands and robbers. These stories made Mme. Bonaparte shudder; she began to cry when she thought of the many dangers which threatened her husband's life, "for," says the duchesse d'Abrantès, "she had attached herself to him with all the devotion which gratitude awakens in a heart capable of experiencing such feelings."[1] At last they all retired to rest, and soon the occupants of the *château* were fast asleep, with the exception, perhaps, of the *châtelaine*, who was still tormented with nervous fears. Suddenly a shot rang out in the still night air. Everybody immediately sprang

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 292.

out of bed. The passages were filled with men and women in various stages of *déshabillé* asking one another what had happened, when Bonaparte appeared in his dressing-gown with a candlestick in his hand and said :

" Don't be alarmed, it's nothing ! "

It was indeed nothing : the horse of one of the *guides* had stumbled over a mole-hill in the middle of the lawn while his master was going his rounds in the grounds of the *château*, and the rider's gun had fallen to the ground and gone off all by itself.

Josephine felt reassured, but she had had a good fright. And yet on the morrow the gentlemen affirmed that it was the ladies who *s'étaient le mieux montrées* on that occasion !

Meanwhile the First Consul was beginning to find his estate of La Malmaison rather small ; he wanted to enlarge it. He wished to buy some more land to the right of his property, but a certain Mlle. Julien, to whom the estate which the general coveted belonged, would not part with it at any price. He then turned his attention to the land to the left of La Malmaison almost in front of the park, and purchased the woods of Butard. He thoroughly enjoyed taking his friends from La Malmaison to inspect his new possessions, and in this he was like all other proprietors, who like showing their friends alterations and improvements on their estates. He was particularly anxious to show Josephine a pavilion which he intended to use as a shooting-box. Unfortunately Mme. Bonaparte was subject to frequent attacks of sick-headache, and on that particular day she had a very bad one. She wanted to go to bed, but the general declared that fresh air was the best remedy for a sick-

headache ; and so poor Josephine was obliged, together with Mme. de Lavalette and Mme. Junot, to get into an equipage with outriders which was already at the door waiting for her. Bonaparte rode before on horseback with Bourrienne ; he would gallop a little way, then return to the side of the carriage, take his wife's hand very prettily, smile at her and then rush off again : it was a charming picture.

The carriage came to a brook lying between two rather steep banks ; it was a difficult place for a carriage to cross. A gun-carriage could easily have crossed it if taken at a gallop ; but Josephine's carriage was not built for steeple-chasing.

" I won't go any farther," cried Mme. Bonaparte. " I shall fall down that *precipice,* I am quite certain I shall ! Go and tell the First Consul that I am returning to the *château.*"

In fact, she made the postilion turn back ; they were already on the road leading to La Malmaison when a sound of galloping made the outriders turn their heads. It was General Bonaparte.

" What's this ? " cried he, contracting his brows as he always did when people did not obey him at once ; " what's this new whim ? Go back from whence you came ! "

He touched the postilion's shoulder with his riding-whip, and the carriage turned round ; it was soon back by the side of the brook.

" Now," said the general to the postilion, " take your time. Gather up your reins and then go at it."

Meanwhile Mme. Bonaparte was screaming loudly :

" No ! no ! I want to get out ! Let me out ! Bona-

parte, please, for mercy's sake, let me out! Oh! I beg of you, please, please! . . ."

She clasped her hands and began to whimper like a little child; it was quite sad to see her. Mme. Junot was much touched; as she was *enceinte* at that time, and as she dreaded a shaking, she asked the First Consul to let her alight.

"Yes," said he, "you may get out." As he had got off his horse at the beginning of this little scene, he went up to the carriage and kindly helped Mme. Junot to descend.

"And Mme. Bonaparte?" said Mme. Junot, who felt genuinely sorry for her terrified companion; "a shaking might hurt her, for—supposing she were in the same condition as myself?"

Whereupon the general looked at her in such a comical way that Mme. Junot could not help laughing, for young women of twenty years of age laugh at everything. Bonaparte, for his part, laughed, too, for a minute; he gave one loud "burst of laughter, loud and clear, which quite startled us."[1]

When Mme. Junot had alighted, Bonaparte had the step put up again. On seeing these preparations, his wife turned pale.

"And now, come," said Bonaparte, "let me help you across *this fearful torrent, this awful precipice.*"

Aided by Bourrienne, he helped Mme. Junot to cross the brook on some stepping-stones which had been placed there for that purpose. When once they were over on the other side, Bonaparte turned round and perceived that the carriage had not moved. Josephine was begging

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 300.

and crying so that the postilion had not dared to whip up his horses.

"Hi, there, you rascal!" cried the general; "are you going to do what I tell you or are you not?"

And he lashed him over the shoulders with his whip.

The postilion waited to hear no more. He whipped up his horses; the carriage bounded forward, leant over on one side, rolled to and fro, stopped, bounded forward again and arrived triumphant on the other side of the brook—not without suffering some damage, however. But it was Mme. Bonaparte who came off worst: she was a perfect wreck: her eyes were surrounded with black circles which made her look strangely old and haggard, and the eyes themselves were red with crying; by dint of rubbing them with her handkerchief, she had rubbed off all the artifices she knew so well how to use in order to hide the flight of time. Her cheeks were flabby and pale; in short, she looked nothing but an ugly, middle-aged woman. This she guessed, for she wrapped herself up in her gauze scarf and continued to cry and sob until they reached Butard.

The First Consul advanced to give her his hand to help her alight. He was very angry when he saw that she was still crying; and he showed his bad temper by dragging his wife rather roughly out of her carriage. He took her a little aside in the wood; he was heard scolding her for having spoilt the day which he had expected to pass so happily in taking a little holiday from his work and from his hundred and one anxieties.

But Josephine never let anyone scold her without standing up for herself; besides "it was quite possible

that she had other reasons for scolding him,"[1] and the opportunity to do so was too good to be allowed to pass unemployed. Bonaparte told her to say no more.

"Now," said he, "kiss me and be quiet. You don't know what you are talking about; I have already told you that you look very ugly when you cry."

Mme. Bonaparte was wrong to take her husband's jokes in so tragic a manner, and her husband was wrong to try and make her enjoy them. They seemed to be quite aware that they had both behaved foolishly; and as neither liked to acknowledge that he or she was in the wrong, the whole party returned to La Malmaison in a very bad temper.

And yet, notwithstanding the First Consul's occasional fits of wildness, such as we have just read and which were certainly caused by his Corsican origin, the couple usually got on very well together. Corsica is the land of impulse; the human heart, as well as the soil, is volcanic there; its inhabitants may be less refined, but they are also more impulsive than the dwellers on the continent who have seen so many centuries of civilization, *bourgeoisisme* and luxury, men debased by artificial life, domesticated animals only fit to be compared to those giant exhibition-plants which, thanks to the grafting and training of skilful gardeners, have lost all traces of their primitive origin. In Corsica, where in the last century, civilized society and its levelling influence had scarcely penetrated, the refining influence of this same civilization was also less known: people still had very little idea of how women ought to be treated. Mme. Bonaparte had perhaps noticed the singular contrast

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 302.

which existed between the perfectly even and polished manners of her first husband, M. de Beauharnais, and the very *natural* manners and savage nature of General Bonaparte, and that not only in his love for her but in their daily life and in the fits of temper to which he sometimes gave way. Oh! what fits of temper those were! How they terrified her! And yet she did nothing to avert them—on the contrary. They were nearly always caused by her mad extravagance, which led her to exceed the allowance which her husband made her and also to exceed the bounds of common sense and thus cause these fits of temper on Napoleon's part. She was fearfully in debt, and she always dreaded having to confess this fact. But it always had to come out sooner or later. As Mme. Bonaparte would not consent to limit her expenses to her income, she bought and bought whatever she saw, whatever was offered to her for sale: jewels, laces, pictures, works of art, toilet articles, ornaments and all sorts of useless things; this good-natured Josephine was never able to resist temptation or to deprive herself of something which she did not really want. Nobody was ever more untidy than she was. And she did not care whether her untidy habits displeased her husband or not; and when she learnt, which she soon did, that the general hated untidiness and debts, she took no trouble to cure herself of the mania for spending money in which she loved to indulge. Neither did she trouble herself to know how she would be able to pay for all her follies; but the tradespeople knew that they would get paid somehow or other. Naturally, with this system of keeping her accounts, bills soon mounted up; demands for payment were con-

stantly coming in; the tradespeople took advantage of Mme. Bonaparte's willingness to buy whatever they showed her, but they were always in a hurry to be paid for what they had sold; and, as Mme. Bonaparte always put off paying them to the very last minute, they began to grumble. These complaints produced a bad effect in Paris. M. de Talleyrand, the Foreign Minister, had to mention it to the First Consul. Bonaparte was furious. Besides his natural aversion to debts and wastefulness, he felt that it would never do, during the first few months of the new form of government of which he was the head, for people to complain that his wife got into debt and that he neglected to pay those debts. So in his kind wish to spare Josephine the pain of being obliged to confess the amount of her debts, which he guessed were pretty heavy, the general told Bourrienne, his private secretary, to ask her exactly how much she owed.

"She must tell the truth," said Bonaparte. "I want to put a stop to this extravagance; it must not begin again. But don't pay without first showing me all the cheating fellows' bills; they're a pack of thieves."[1]

Bourrienne was delighted to learn that M. de Talleyrand had told the First Consul all about the matter. The demands for payment which came in every day would soon have obliged him to speak himself to Bonaparte upon the subject; but he had kept putting off this disagreeable revelation. So he went to see Josephine and told her that she ought to be very pleased, as the First Consul had given him commands to inquire exactly how much she owed, for he was going to pay her debts. Mme. Bonaparte was very pleased indeed to think that

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. IV, p. 30.

her husband was going to pay her debts; but she was terrified when, on turning the matter over in her mind, she realized what an awful sum she would have to confess she owed. There would surely be a scene; and then supposing the general should find that his wife, who cared so little for him and who had repaid his pure, disinterested affection for her with deceit, was not worth all this trouble and expense? Her dread of a scene was increased by another fear: suppose he should revert to his former plan of getting a divorce, a plan of which the entire Bonaparte family approved? For it is quite certain that he, on his return from Egypt, had wished to divorce her; and, had not somebody suggested to Josephine that Eugène and Hortense should throw themselves at his feet, Bonaparte would have done so—and Heaven knows he had plenty of ground to go on: he could have obtained a divorce without any trouble. Oh! that dread of a divorce! the loss of her position! . . . this dread was to haunt her like a horrible nightmare until 1809. The poor creature was never again to know what peace of mind meant until the dreaded separation had become an accomplished fact.

Meanwhile the thought that she would have to confess what she owed threw her into a state of indescribable distress.

"No!" said she, in her terror and confusion, "I cannot confess the whole truth—the sum is much too large. I will only tell half the truth!"

Bourrienne remarked to her that it would be very wrong of her to hide anything and that she had much better take advantage of the general's kind offer to pay all her debts, no matter how heavy they might be.

" But he will make an awful scene! I'm afraid of him, I'm afraid!"

" Whether it be half the sum or the whole, he will be just as angry, madame. The Consul has a sharp temper; you know that fact, I see, and I cannot deny it. He thinks that you are rather heavily in debt; he is ready to pay off those debts. You will be scolded and he will make a fine scene, I do not doubt; but the exact sum will make but very little difference. If you hide the greater number of your debts, in a short time people will begin to complain again; the First Consul will hear of it, and then there will be another scene. Believe me, confess everything! The result will be the same; you will have to listen for once in your lifetime to some very disagreeable truths, and then you will hear no more about the matter; but if you hide anything, you will never hear the last of it."[1]

" I shall never be able to make up my mind to tell him the truth. No, it is impossible. . . . I owe, I believe, about 1,200,000 francs; I shall confess to 600,000—that will be quite enough for the present. I can pay the rest out of my savings."

It was a capital idea. If Mme. Bonaparte indeed said this, it really was very funny! Josephine's savings? To think of her talking of savings, when she spent more than half a million francs beyond her allowance every year! She might have exclaimed with the duchesse de Maine: " I have an unfortunate knack of being unable to do without things I do not require." But how many people there are who suffer from the same complaint!

The poor woman argued for a long time, trying to get

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. IV, p. 31.

out of having to tell the truth ; but she was quite unable to screw up her courage to confess all her debts. At last Bourrienne had to give in, and to promise that he would only mention the sum of 600,000 francs to the First Consul.

"He is so passionate," said Josephine ; "I know him well. I should never be able to endure his scorn ! "

In truth one would think that the tables had been turned : that it was the husband who was wasting her fortune, that no one dared to remonstrate with him, and that she was the victim.

Mme. Bonaparte's debts were enormous. Besides the 1,200,000 francs which she owed her different tradespeople (and money was worth twice as much in those days as it is worth nowadays), "she had purchased national property in the *canton* of Glabbaix, in the department of la Dyle,[1] to the value of 1,195,000 francs and she still owed two-thirds of the price—the other third was to be paid by her aunt, Mme. Renaudin, who had become Mme. de Beauharnais and who had not got a penny to pay for it."[2] And, what was more, La Malmaison, which Mme. Bonaparte had bought during her husband's absence in Egypt, was still unpaid for, viz. 225,000 francs.

And then people said that General Bonaparte married the widow Beauharnais for her money, whereas the unfortunate creature only had debts !

The First Consul paid everything : he paid both big and little bills ; he paid the saddler, the coach-maker, the upholsterer, and the milliner who had supplied

[1] The department of la Dyle took its name from the river of that name in Belgium ; it only bore this name during the French domination.

[2] Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et les femmes*.

thirty-eight new bonnets in the space of one month, herons' plumes to the value of 1800 francs, and 800 francs' worth of perfumes, etc., etc. He paid everything and everybody. However, Josephine's ruinous extravagance made a painful impression upon him as we can easily understand; and it was while he was still suffering from her conduct, that he said one day at a meeting of the *Conseil d'Etat:*

"Women only think of dressing up and of amusing themselves."

It is true that the behaviour of the First Consul's sisters was not calculated to make him alter his poor opinion of women for which Josephine was responsible. We must confess that most of the bills sent to Mme. Bonaparte by her tradespeople were singularly exaggerated. These tradespeople who, as everybody is aware, are sometimes quite proud of overcharging their customers, took advantage of Josephine's willingness to buy everything and to get herself into debt; and so they tried to cheat the lazy, thoughtless Creole in every way they could. Bourrienne was commissioned to look over their bills; he cut them down to half the original amount; very few of the tradespeople protested—which does not say much for their probity. When one of their number received only 35,000 francs instead of the 80,000 he had demanded, he had the impudence to say, while pocketing his money, that he had done a good stroke of business after all. The First Consul was quite right: they were a pack of thieves. Have they changed much since those days?

Mme. de Rémusat, who is too apt to see Napoleon through the eyes of Josephine, whose friend she was—

and that is why she is so blind—says that: "Napoleon rather liked people to get into debt, because, if they did so, it prevented them becoming too independent . . . and that was why he never would put Josephine's affairs in order, so that he might be able to frighten her if necessary."[1] That, perhaps, was Josephine's view of the case; for Josephine was ever haunted by the spectre of a divorce and the dread of losing her position like a lazy employé or clerk who is always being threatened with dismissal; but this was not the real reason. It was not Napoleon's intention, by keeping Josephine short of money, to obtain peace at home. Concerning the matter of his wife's extravagance, he said while at Saint Helena:

"I could not help thinking sometimes that Josephine's extravagant outlay upon her conservatories and picture-gallery would be the ruin of my *Jardin des Plantes* or of my *Musée de Paris.*"[2]

How many other similar thoughts passed through his brain unexpressed in words?

Josephine certainly spent an enormous amount of money on her hothouses at La Malmaison; she possessed several rare plants which had cost exorbitant prices; she once paid as much as 4000 francs (£160) for a single tulip bulb. Had she, like the natives of Haarlem, a mania for tulips? No, she had a mania for spending money. Somebody showed her a tulip bulb which, they told her, was worth 4000 francs: she immediately bought it—and never gave another thought to it! And it was the same with everything else. Her dresses? She had six hundred at one time. Was not that German

[1] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 135.
[2] *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène* (Edition Garnier, 1894), Vol. I, p. 135.

author a prophet when he said during the *Directoire:* "A Parisian lady requires three hundred and sixty-five bonnets, as many pairs of shoes, six hundred dresses and twelve chemises."[1]

He was mistaken about the chemises, at least in Mme. Bonaparte's case, for she changed hers three times a day,[2] so twelve would not have been enough. As for her dresses, she had some very extraordinary costumes which are quite worth mention. Here is one which she wore at the house of her brother-in-law and enemy, Lucien, during the early days of the Consulate: it was made of white crêpe entirely covered with little feathers from that strange bird called the toucan; these feathers were sewn on the crêpe and a little bead was glued to the tip of each feather. Mme. Bonaparte wore a complete set of rubies with this costume. In her hair, artistically arranged by the hairdresser, Duplan, whose salary exceeded that of a general, she wore a garland of toucan plumes sprinkled with beads which gave her a very singular expression.

But here is even a more eccentric costume: it was also made of white crêpe and scattered all over with rose-leaves, real rose-leaves of the palest pink. This very spring-like trimming could only be added just before putting on the dress; and then, she could only wear this strange, sweet-smelling costume at home for an hour or two at the most, and she was obliged to keep standing all the time; for, even supposing she was as light as a sylph, how could she have sat down on those rose-leaves without crumpling them a little? It is a

[1] Kotzebue, *Souvenirs de Paris*, Vol. I.
[2] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 345.

curious fact that this was the only pink dress Mme. Bonaparte wore during the days of the Consulate; and this dress was not really pink, it only looked so on account of the petals which were sewn on it. Afterwards, for the *fête* given at the distribution of the crosses of the *Légion d'honneur*, she wore a really pink dress. Towards the end of the Empire, she often wore pink in order to try and look younger; but when youth has once fled, it never returns.

Although poor Josephine seldom paid her tradespeople, she was no richer for that fact; she frequently found herself without money, almost without a *sou*, so that she could not pay her daily bills.

"I sent," writes General Auguste Colbert in a letter dated September 8th, 1810, "I sent the most beautiful dog imaginable to Mme. Bonaparte; she gave six francs to my footman—it was not much; had she given him nothing, she would have done far better and seemed less stingy."[1]

[1] General Thoumas, *Les grands cavaliers du Premier Empire: Auguste Colbert*, Vol. I, p. 315.

CHAPTER IV

Ceremony at Notre-Dame for the enthroning of the *Concordat*—Mme. Bonaparte's livery—Mme. Hulot takes her seat in the gallery reserved for the First Consul's family—Mme. Bonaparte's good taste and indulgence—Hunting-party at Mortefontaine—Family precedence—An unfortunate episode—A journey in Belgium—Accident—The people display genuine enthusiasm—Present from the city of Brussels to Mme. Bonaparte—Return—Jealousy of Josephine—Dread of a divorce—Mlle. Duchesnois and Mlle. Georges—A midnight expedition—Panic and defeat—The First Consul cross-examines Mme. de Rémusat—Mme. de Rémusat at the camp of Boulogne—Gossip—Mme. Bonaparte's extraordinary leniency—Mme. Bonaparte makes M. de Talleyrand marry his old mistress—Attempt of the 3rd *nivôse*—Josephine narrowly escapes losing her life—Mme. Bonaparte and Fouché—She receives a sum of one thousand francs a day for spying upon her husband.

THE promulgation of the *Concordat* in the beginning of the year 1802 was the occasion of a grand ceremony at Notre-Dame. A solemn *Te Deum* was sung in that sacred edifice on Easter Sunday. The church had not been used for religious services for many years, therefore the festival for its reopening was a great event among other extraordinary events. The First Consul had decided to assist at this ceremony when the Catholic faith was to be restored to its former exalted position in France. All the chief functionaries, anxious to pay their respects to the man who was strong enough and plucky enough to do such an audacious thing, hastened in crowds to the cathedral of Notre-Dame. Mme. Bonaparte was to be

present at the ceremony and a place of honour was reserved for her in the centre of the gallery. The church of Notre-Dame had, at that time, a magnificent gallery in old and exquisitely carved oak ; but, as it was beginning to look rather rickety and to fall to pieces, it was demolished soon after and done away with altogether. Sixty or eighty ladies, chosen from among the wives of the chief civil and military functionaries, were specially appointed or invited to attend Mme. Bonaparte ; her four ladies-in-waiting would not have sufficed for such a grand occasion and would have scarcely made any show in the huge building.

The First Consul had requested everybody to appear as magnificently clad, and to make as much display as possible ; his request was treated as a command, so there was a large number of smart equipages. This was the first appearance in public of the livery which the First Consul had chosen for his household ; it was much admired.

Liveries, together with many other things, had disappeared with the monarchy ; so it was looked upon almost as a novelty. Among other liveries were those of Mme. Murat, Mme. Junot, Mme. Marmont, and Mme. Savary. The servants of Mme. Duroc, daughter of the banker Hervas de Menara, wore the First Consul's livery, because her husband was grand-marshal of the palace. A footman stood behind each of these ladies' carriages. Mme. Bonaparte had two behind her equipage. Everybody belonging to the consular court began, from that day, to try to cut out their neighbours and to endeavour to astonish the populace by the luxury and display which, during the Empire, surpassed everything anybody had ever seen before.

In the carriage of the wife of the First Consul sat her daughter and her sisters-in-law. The other equipages followed without any regard to precedence or etiquette. On arriving outside the cathedral, Mme. Bonaparte alighted and entered the sacred building, followed by those ladies who had been chosen to accompany her. The old gallery was soon transformed into a veritable flower-garden of sweet-scented living blooms; the beautiful spring toilettes of all these women, who assuredly had not been chosen from among the oldest and ugliest, made a truly fascinating picture. The dresses were perhaps a little too gaudy considering the solemn ceremony which was about to take place in this sacred building; but these giddy young creatures were very like children: the smallest thing amused them. Many of them looked upon this ceremony as a good occasion on which to show their new clothes, or considered it as exciting as a first night at the Opera. Mme. Murat laughed at her friend, Mme. Junot, who had had the good taste to wear a black lace dress, a costume which she considered more suitable for this grand religious solemnity. A little incident, which had made its authoress look very silly, had occurred shortly before Mme. Bonaparte's arrival. Mme. Hulot, General Moreau's mother-in-law, a proud, jealous woman who, in assuming the title of mother-in-law, thought it also the proper thing to assume the traditional and ridiculous functions attendant on that rôle and to exercise, as many mothers-in-law do, a great deal of petty tyranny by meddling with what did not concern her—Mme. Hulot had come with her daughter to witness the ceremony. The gallery, as we know, had been reserved for the wife of the First

Consul and for her escort of ladies. In order to prevent any mistake, the Minister of the Interior, Chaptal, had placed an officer at the entrance. When Mme. Hulot saw all the empty seats in this gallery and perceived that they were far the best (which was quite true), she concluded that she had a right to sit there (which was not so true). Was she not General Moreau's mother-in-law? This woman, with her jealousy and ridiculous pretensions, had already caused her son-in-law no end of annoyance, and it was entirely her fault that poor Moreau eventually came to such a bad end. His "martinet of a mother-in-law," as Napoleon called her, positively tyrannized over him. Moreau loved his wife; but his wife was under the thumb of her mother, who naturally took advantage of the situation to make the young couple do exactly as she wished them to do, so everything went wrong in the establishment. Moreau, in his desire not to vex his wife and in order to enjoy a little peace at home, gave in little by little, until at last he was no longer master in his own house. How many men are in the same position! . . . Mme. Hulot elbowed her way up to the door of the gallery reserved for Mme. Bonaparte. The officer was anxious to obey orders; but this soldier, who would not have quailed before a whole regiment of cavalry, was no match for this woman; he lacked the courage to resist her attack and so he let her get the better of him. The virago pushed past the soldier and went and plumped herself down in the seat reserved for the wife of the chief magistrate of the Republic. Such impudence, which we see even nowadays among women of the same class as Mme. Hulot, is quite inconceivable, but it is more common than we think. The First Consul immediately noticed

this display of bad taste and it put him out of temper for the rest of the ceremony. As for Mme. Bonaparte, she had the good taste not to notice Mme. Moreau and her mother and to take a seat a little farther away. The ceremony was very long ; the imposing roar of the cannon, the melodious grandeur of the bells ringing to and fro in the old towers, mingled with the sacred hymns and chanting of the priests and the deep hum of the organs ; clarions and drums sounding calls and beating salutes supplied the necessary patriotic note ; this music touched the inmost fibres of the human heart, while sunbeams, streaming through the multi-coloured windows, shed a strange light upon the crowd of human beings in the nave. And meanwhile clouds of perfumed incense mounted up into the majestic vaults of the old cathedral, dissolved in bluish smoke through the forest-like groves of stone columns, and penetrated into the darkest and farthest corners of the little side chapels. The whole scene appealed to the souls of the spectators ; their hearts beat faster for many a day at the mere thought of it !

The religious ceremony was followed by a reception which in turn was followed by a small family dinner-party at Joseph Bonaparte's house. Everybody with one accord complimented Mme. Bonaparte upon the perfect grace with which she had played her part as wife of the head of the State in the midst of this procession of handsome young women. It was one of the happiest days in her whole life.

Not only had the First Consul a very pleasant country house, but his brothers for their part also owned very nice estates in the environs of Paris. Lucien had purchased le Plessis-Chamant, near Senlis, and Joseph had

lately acquired the magnificent property of Mortefontaine, one of the most beautiful estates in France. And then, it was not very far from Lucien's country-house, so they often went to visit one another. La Malmaison and Mortefontaine were so close together that, if they started in the morning, they could pass a part of the day together and then return after dinner to Mortefontaine or La Malmaison, as the case might be. Joseph sometimes invited his friends to come and hunt on his estate. One day, when his house was full of distinguished visitors from Paris, including many men and women of note in the world of letters, art, politics or warfare, he organized an impromptu fox-hunt. The party was composed of General and Mme. Murat, Mme. Baciocchi, Mme. Leclerc, Lucien, the comte de Cobentzel, the poet Casti, Mme. de Staël, Stanislas Girardin, the orator; Brégy Girardin, his brother; Miot, orator and Joseph's most intimate friend; Rœderer, author, wag, savant and politician; Regnault de Saint-Jean d'Angély, one of the most capable men of his time; Arnault, the witty poet who later wrote the *Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire;* Andrieux, Boufflers, Fontanes, Mme. de Boufflers, universally known and loved for her wit and good-nature when she was still Mme. de Sabran; and then there were Marmont, Chauvelin, Mathieu de Montmorency, who was sure to be seen wherever Mme. de Staël went. The owner of Mortefontaine, anxious to help his guests pass the time in an agreeable manner, got up a fox-hunt. Mme. Bonaparte came on horseback. While General Bonaparte was in a little wood, the hunted fox ran between Mme. Bonaparte and Rœderer. When the Consul returned, she said:

" Bonaparte, I saw the fox, it went that way ! "

" Oh ! well," replied the First Consul, " you weren't afraid, were you ? Rœderer was here to protect you."[1] In speaking thus, General Bonaparte alluded rather unkindly to his wife's frequent attacks of unreasonable terror.

It was during one of these parties, a family party this time, that a certain incident occurred which passed almost unnoticed, for it was only witnessed by the members of the Bonaparte family, but which showed that " Bonaparte was beginning to give place to Napoleon."

Joseph Bonaparte had invited the First Consul to come and dine with his wife at Mortefontaine. Mme. Letizia was also present. A happy day was spent in strolling beneath the magnificent trees in the park ; their mutual enjoyment was unspoiled by any family squabbles, always to be dreaded whenever the Bonaparte family happened to meet the Beauharnais. Mme. Letizia was always most careful to say nothing which could be misinterpreted by her daughter-in-law ; and Mme. Bonaparte, for her part, showed her husband's mother every attention ; she was extremely polite, but there was no sign of cordiality between them ; she was dreadfully cold. Luckily Lucien's ceaseless flow of conversation filled up any gaps. The guests were just going into the dining-room when the incident, which everybody had been dreading for so long, occurred. On hearing dinner announced, the master of the house rose from his seat, said that he would give his arm to his mother to take her in to dinner and that she was to sit on his right, while Lucien was to take in Mme. Bonaparte, who was to sit on his left. The First Consul did not think it

[1] Rœderer, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 331.

seemly for his wife, the wife of the chief magistrate of the Republic, to occupy an inferior place; and so he told Joseph to put their mother on his left and Josephine on his right. This little incident had already made everybody feel sufficiently uncomfortable, when the guests rose from their seats and began to move towards the dining-room. However, Joseph took no notice of his powerful brother's request or rather command. He had already taken his mother's hand and Lucien had given his arm to Josephine, when Bonaparte rushed across the room, wrenched Josephine away from Lucien, took her arm, walked into the dining-room before everybody else, and then sat down at the table and made her sit by his side. This scene, as we can easily imagine, had made the guests feel still more uncomfortable. Wishing to have someone by his side with whom he could talk and thus regain his self-possession, the First Consul summoned Mme. de Rémusat to him and commanded her to take the vacant seat at his side. But the dinner-party, as we can guess, was quite spoiled; nobody knew what to say; in fact, everybody and, above all, Mme. Bonaparte, the involuntary cause of this disaster, was thankful when it came to an end. Lucien, in his memoirs, alludes doubtless to this very inconsiderate act of ill-placed authority, to this want of tact as related by Mme. de Rémusat,[1] and of which we find all too many examples in Napoleon's life, when he says, *à propos* of family precedence, that "the First Consul seemed to take a pleasure in causing these scenes in order to prove his wife's supremacy."[2]

[1] Mme de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 237.

[2] Th. Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 442.

On the day following this unfortunate incident, the First Consul started for Belgium. He took Josephine with him. A general belonging to the consular guard travelled in their carriage, which was preceded by that of Duroc and the aides-de-camp and followed by another occupied by M. and Mme. de Rémusat and Mme. de Talhouët. The horses in the latter equipage suddenly ran away and the vehicle was overturned into a ditch. The entire caravan stopped. The First Consul ran to a cottage whither the victims of the accident had been carried, while Josephine wept and displayed the greatest anxiety for their safety. At last somebody came to reassure her: nobody was hurt. The general gave his arm to Mme. de Rémusat, who was still trembling, and made her get into his carriage and sit by his wife's side: he reassured both ladies, whom he laughingly advised to kiss each other and to have a good cry, "for that," said he, "always does a woman good."[1]

This journey was a perfect triumphal procession: everywhere the inhabitants of every village and every town crowded to hail the extraordinary individual who, in so short a time, had erected, on the ruins found by him on the 18th *brumaire*, a new France, powerful and admired of all nations; everywhere he met with enthusiasm, genuine, sincere, open-hearted enthusiasm. It was nothing but one long cry of affection and gratitude from Paris to Brussels. The nation, in its joy, applauded him to whom it owed a happiness which it had never known before; these cries of gratitude, coming from the people's hearts, went straight to the heart of the First Consul, whose eyes filled with tears on more than one

[1] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 239.

occasion, while Mme. Bonaparte, moved by different feelings, let her tears flow unchecked; as for Mme. de Rémusat, she was in scarcely better plight.

The municipality of Brussels offered Mme. Bonaparte a magnificent equipage in the name of the town. Speeches, receptions, all sorts of *fêtes* and military displays, followed one another to an accompaniment of pealing bells and booming cannon; and throughout the visit of the head of the French Republic to Belgium, greater honours than had ever before been offered to any sovereign were made to him and his wife. They had a splendid reception at the mother-church of Sainte-Gudule; the clergy, bearing crucifixes, canopies and banners, advanced in great state as far as the portal in order to receive General Bonaparte. Mme. Bonaparte ought to have been by her husband's side, but the First Consul did not wish her to accompany him, so she was given a seat in a gallery.

This six-weeks' journey was like a fairy tale, one continual round of pleasure, which made a great impression not only upon the travellers but also upon the population. Many years later, when Napoleon was at St. Helena, people still talked at Brussels, Liége, and Maestricht of the wonderful genius of this man whose fall they had learnt to regret, and of Mme. Bonaparte's graciousness and good-nature.

The First Consul was very fond of his wife; but that fact did not prevent him indulging from time to time in little flirtations with any woman who managed to attract his attention for a few minutes or a few days. These flirtations, or rather passing fancies, were nearly always known to the domestics of the palace and were, as we can imagine, the favourite topic of conversation

not only below-stairs at the Tuileries, but in many a humbler establishment. There was very little that Mme. Bonaparte did not know; true or false, she was told everything. A number of women, to whom she was foolish enough to listen and weak enough to question and to bribe—for bribery had become a habit with her and she never dropped this habit until after her divorce—told her everything they could possibly discover concerning her husband's words and deeds and extra-conjugal adventures.

She was beginning to be jealous. It was her turn now to feel the pangs of jealousy. While in Italy, she had made sport of his love for her and had made him suffer cruelly; she had taken advantage of his absence in Egypt to betray this great affection, which must have been truly great and sincere since it had enabled him to forgive such unpardonable misconduct; and her husband, who had been informed of what was going on on the other side of that belt of blue water, had been wounded again, had suffered so cruelly that his heart had nearly been broken. Oh! yes, Bonaparte knew what jealousy meant.

There is one infallible law in this world: as we sow, so must we reap. Mme. Bonaparte's deceit and misconduct were quite enough to kill her husband's affection for her. Any other person than General Bonaparte would have divorced her. . . . And yet he had forgiven her, he had even continued to love her—but not with the old ethereal passion of 1796! And it was entirely Josephine's own fault that that love had changed. If she had loved her husband as he loved her, never would he have dreamt of being unfaithful to her: if he was unfaithful now, she might well say: "it's my own fault!"

But she never did say that! Besides, she was far too busy watching and spying upon the First Consul to examine her own conscience and ascertain whether she was not responsible in some manner for this sad state of affairs. Was she beginning to love her husband? . . . No, not yet; she only realized that she cared more for him now than when he was madly in love with her, and this feeling of affection was to go on increasing from year to year. But her chief cause for anxiety was lest her husband should fall deeply in love with some mistress who would bear him a child and whom he would then marry. Always this same dread of a divorce, always this fear of losing her position! As for her wounded pride as a woman, the forgotten vows of fidelity, his betrayed affection—she never gave a thought to such trifles. Hear what she said to Mme. de Rémusat after the latter's return from the camp of Boulogne, where her friend's intimacy with the First Consul had been remarked and reported, of course, by certain well-meaning creatures to Mme. Bonaparte: "She was not alarmed on this occasion, for she knew that Bonaparte would not dream of marrying his wife's lady-in-waiting."

When, maddened by the report that her husband was engaged in another passing love affair, she went to worry him with her indiscreet questions and complaints, he said to her:

"Follow the example of Livea and you will find an Augustus in me."

"What does he mean about Livea?" asked the poor creature, all in tears, of Joseph and Lucien.

"Follow the example of Livea!" replied the two brothers.

"People say that she took our advice," adds Lucien who relates the incident. "It was about the best thing she could do."[1]

These domestic scenes usually concluded with a flood of tears. In order to console herself, Mme. Bonaparte used to go and confide all her troubles—Napoleon himself said it did women good to do so—to her friend Mme. de Rémusat. On one occasion, when she had been grumbling at her husband (whom she seldom spared behind his back), at her brothers-in-law and at her sisters-in-law, who also usually got the worst of it on these occasions, Mme. de Rémusat exhorted her to let the storm blow over and to try and calm herself, in short, to resume those naturally placid, gentle manners which were one of her chief chrams and always pleased her husband so. Josephine settled down, the storm blew over, and the couple soon made friends again.

Bourrienne tells us that the First Consul and Josephine still shared the same room. In order to prevent him losing his good habits and contracting *liaisons* which might have caused more trouble in the establishment, Josephine persuaded her husband that it was dangerous for him to sleep in a room by himself. "If somebody," said she, "managed to get into your room in order to murder you in your sleep, I should wake immediately, for I sleep very lightly; I should ring my bell and scream, and then they would come to my assistance."

Bonaparte laughed at his wife's fears and continued to do as he had always done hitherto. When his evening's work was done, he used to go up to his bedroom, when

[1] Th. Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, Vol. II.

Josephine, having been informed of this fact, would go and join him.

Meanwhile the winter of 1802–3 was extremely gay. All the memoirs of the time speak of the splendid *fêtes* which took place in Paris; there were as many as ten thousand balls given in this one season alone. The theatres were very crowded. Two actresses of the Théâtre-Français, Mlle. Duchesnois and Mlle. Georges, were equally popular with the public, one for her beauty, the other for her talent. Paris, in its extreme infatuation for these two actresses, was divided into two camps. General Bonaparte preferred Mlle. Georges on account of her beauty; she, flattered by his admiration, could deny him nothing. She sometimes went in the evening to the Tuileries, where the First Consul received her in private. But nothing passed unnoticed in the palace. Mme. Bonaparte was soon informed of her husband's new *liaison*. She was terribly distressed. She sent for Mme. de Rémusat and, bursting into tears, confided to her, through her sobs, that a dreadful thing had happened.

Once again Mme. de Rémusat endeavoured to console her; she did her best to try and persuade her that the rumour was not true, that she must not think, because a woman had been seen crossing a passage . . .

"No, no, I tell you, I know all about it. Mlle Georges is up there with him . . . and I want to catch them together."

Mme. de Rémusat tried to make her understand that she could do neither them nor herself any good, even supposing she did "catch them together"; she told her how very unseemly it would be for her to spy upon her husband like that.

" I want to go, I tell you, and you shall come with me."

Mme. de Rémusat made one more effort to show her that she, Mme. de Rémusat, as a mere lady of the palace, could not think for a moment of spying upon the master of the house, that such behaviour would be most improper and that, even supposing she complied with her mistress's wishes, it would do no good.

" Yes, yes, I desire you to come with me ; I am determined, quite determined. Would you desert your friend just at the very time she needs you most ? "

Mme. de Rémusat, much annoyed by her mistress's whim, ended by giving in to her wishes, for she was convinced that they would find all the doors locked and that they would not be able to enter the First Consul's private apartments.

It was one o'clock in the morning. They walked one behind the other along the passages of the palace, lighted only by a few feeble lamps. Their shadows looked strangely huge as they crept along in this semi-obscurity ; Mme. Bonaparte shuddered. They ascended the secret staircase leading to the First Consul's suite of apartments. Mme. de Rémusat carried a candle. Suddenly they heard a slight noise.

" Oh ! heavens ! " cried Mme. Bonaparte, terrified ; " supposing it were Roustan, his mameluke ? He is quite capable of cutting off our heads with his scimitar ! "

On hearing these words, Mme. de Rémusat was terror-struck ; she immediately turned on her heel and rushed off brandishing the candlestick. She returned to the *salon*, breathless with fear, without troubling to see if Mme. Bonaparte had followed her and without noticing that she had left her in the dark.

Mme. Bonaparte, much astonished at having been left to face *the danger* all alone, appeared a few minutes later. But she could not help laughing when she saw her companion's terrified expression ; and then Mme. de Rémusat began to laugh also; and thus ended this ridiculous nocturnal voyage of discovery.

But the serving-women who were paid by Mme. Bonaparte to spy upon the First Consul were not slow in noticing that she was jealous, and they soon let everybody know it.

It was some time after this incident that the First Consul determined to obtain more freedom, and so he resolved to tell his wife that he had made up his mind to occupy a room to himself in future. In order to carry out the important domestic revolution which he was then contemplating, he invited Mme. de Rémusat to remain and dine with him and his wife one evening.

" Well, Mme. de Rémusat ! " said he, " is a husband obliged to give in to the whims of a wife who will not allow her husband to occupy a room to himself ? "

It was an embarrassing question, but the reply which she was now called upon to make embarrassed her still more. Supposing she were to say that the husband was not obliged to give in to such whims, her mistress would never forgive her ; if she were to reply that the husband ought to give in to his wife's wishes, she would set Bonaparte against her. She tried to evade the question by replying :

" How can a young woman of twenty years of age have any opinion upon the matter ? Would it be seemly for her to give her opinion ? Is it seemly for her even to think of such a thing ? "

But the First Consul found the subject highly entertaining; he was determined to hear her opinion upon the matter. So Mme. de Rémusat, who was a very witty woman, put an end to the discussion by saying:

"I really don't know what a wife ought to expect of her husband, nor how far a husband ought to give in to his wife's wishes; but it seems to me that if the First Consul alters any of his habits, people will say very disagreeable things; and any change made in the domestic arrangements of the palace will be immediately noticed and much discussed by us."[1]

It was a capital way out of the difficulty. The First Consul began to laugh and pinched her ear, saying:

"There you go! You are a true woman! You women always stand up for one another!"

And there the matter ended.

But Josephine did not laugh, for she knew perfectly well what would happen. From that day Bonaparte carried out his intention of occupying a separate room. This fact was not calculated to calm the jealous suspicions of Mme. Bonaparte who, probably because her husband had taken steps to see that he was no longer spied upon, was henceforth unable to obtain information as to the identity of those visitors whom he received in his private apartments. It was not so very long ago that the poor woman had allowed herself to be worried by certain reports, and now she was worried because she no longer received any. This silence boded no good. At last the First Consul started for the camp of Boulogne, and then Josephine was less anxious.

When General Bonaparte went to Boulogne, he took

[1] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 213.

M. de Rémusat with him. The latter falling seriously ill, his wife left Paris in a great hurry and went to nurse him. When M. de Rémusat was convalescent, the First Consul sent for Mme. de Rémusat to come and see him in the barracks at Pont-de-Briques where he was quartered and asked her how Josephine had behaved on learning that Mlle. Georges had been to see him on one or two occasions. He added :

" She worries herself much more than is necessary. Josephine is always afraid that I shall fall seriously in love with somebody or the other. Does she not know that love is not for me ? For, what is love ? It is a passion which makes us renounce the whole world for the one we love. And truly it is not in my nature to be so exclusive. So what does it matter to her if I amuse myself with passing flirtations which have nothing to do with the heart, with the affections ? There," continued he, looking rather gravely at her, " that is what her friends must tell her and must try to make her believe ; and, above all, they must not try to curry favour with her by pandering to her silly fears."

Mme. de Rémusat adds :

" These last words were uttered in a harsh, defiant tone which I did not deserve, and I think he knew that fact perfectly well."[1]

The First Consul, it is true, always enjoyed listening to Mme. de Rémusat, and he also liked talking to her about his wife's jealousy. He invited her to repeat her visit. People were usually only too delighted to receive and accept such invitations, which were looked upon as a command. And, as the First Consul had said that

[1] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 265.

" love was not for him," Mme. de Rémusat, apparently reassured upon that point, did not hesitate to accept the invitation, and so, for the space of a whole month, she spent her evenings *en tête-à-tête* with the First Consul.

History does not record whether Josephine's jealousy was ever mentioned during those lengthy confabulations at Pont-de-Briques ; but we may be certain that they aroused jealousy in her breast. The First Consul's aides-de-camp, astonished that a young and pretty woman of twenty-two years of age should thus spend her evenings with their general, who was no longer a very young man, if you like, but who was still very young for his years, could not believe that metaphysics were the only topic of conversation discussed during those long hours. So they began to gossip just as if they were nothing but a lot of old maids talking over the tea-cups ; they talked to such effect that some of the gossip from Boulogne soon spread to Paris and reached Mme. Bonaparte's ear. In truth, it was scarcely worth while to confide her jealous fears to her companion, if that companion was to give her serious cause for jealousy ! So when Mme. de Rémusat returned to Paris, she found " her jealous mistress rather cold and distant in her manner towards her."

She was at a loss to account for this fact. One of her friends then told her what people had said concerning her intimacy with General Bonaparte at the camp of Boulogne. " The effect produced by this revelation," said she, " was exactly as if somebody had suddenly plunged a knife into my heart."

At last, mortified by Mme. Bonaparte's cold manner towards her, she could no longer hide her feelings ; so one day she said to her, with tears in her eyes :

"Ah! madame, how can you find it in your heart to suspect me?"

Now Josephine could never see anybody cry without feeling inclined to do so herself; she was really kind and compassionate. She went up to Mme. de Rémusat. Now she verily believed that there had been something more than platonic friendship between her and the First Consul; however, she kissed her friend as if she wanted her to understand that she forgave her, but that it must not happen again.

"But she did not understand me," says Mme. de Rémusat; "she was incapable of understanding my indignation at such a thought; and without troubling herself to ascertain whether my relations with her husband at Boulogne had been what she had been informed they were, she was quite content to comfort herself with the thought that at all events those relations had been of short duration. The idea that such a thought could wound me and wound me cruelly did not seem to occur to her. She confessed to me that she had reproached her husband concerning me and that he had seemed to enjoy leaving her in uncertainty as to the real facts of the case."[1]

Mme. Bonaparte, as we see, seems to have had very peculiar ideas concerning the question of conjugal fidelity, a question which, notwithstanding her apparently jealous nature, she treated with remarkable indifference. She took her husband's passing love affairs very coolly and would have thought no more of them than she thought of her own little flirtations, if she had not foreseen that her husband's infidelity would eventually lead

[1] *Mémoires de Mme. Rémusat*, Vol. I, p. 284.

to a divorce and the loss of her position with all the immense advantages attached thereunto. This dread terrified her and poisoned her whole existence.

We must imitate Mme. Bonaparte and refrain from trying to fathom the mystery of those *tête-à-tête* conversations at Pont-de-Briques; if Mme. de Rémusat had disliked being suspected, she would have taken care to contradict the reports concerning her relations with the First Consul; she would have imitated Mme. d'Abrantès, who does not hide the fact although she does not boast of it, that Bonaparte had a passing fancy for her in 1803 at La Malmaison, while Josephine was drinking the waters at Plombières; but she repulsed his advances, and this episode, which is not one of the least interesting, she repeats with full details in her memoirs.

Mme. Bonaparte, as we have already seen, was very much given to match-making. She had had a finger in Moreau's marriage, she had married Lavalette to her niece Emilie de Beauharnais, and she had wanted to find a wife for Méneval, but he would not hear of it and later chose a wife for himself. Such things frequently happen. But what was more extraordinary was that, when she wanted to find a wife for M. de Talleyrand, she succeeded. Did she offer him one of the richest heiresses in the land, since money was practically the only thing he cared for? Oh, no! this woman had not a *sou* with which to bless herself. Was she a lady by birth? Did she belong, like him, to the highest nobility in the land? No, she was the daughter of a Batavian sailor and was formerly a dancer in a theatre in Calcutta. Was she distinguished for her good qualities and for morality, then? Neither morals nor virtues were con-

sidered in the matter. Mme. Bonaparte made him marry his old mistress, Mme. Grant, " who had been mistress to twenty other men " ; she made him marry her when she had lost all traces of youth and beauty. Was this woman very intelligent ? No, she was a very stupid woman.

In relating the tittle-tattle of those days, Mme. de Rémusat says that Napoleon took a spiteful pleasure in making the erstwhile bishop of Autun marry and that he was secretly delighted to be able to dishonour him in the eyes of the world in order to clip his wings and make him unpopular. But this is a mistake. The First Consul took an interest in the marriage because he wished to please his wife.[1] It is certain that Mme. Bonaparte, " who was always a victim to her own feelings of compassion, did her very best to make her husband like Mme. Grant."[2] A witness whom we can believe, Méneval, confirms this report. " The empress Josephine, who was a friend of Mme. Grant," says he, " did her very best to take her friend's part and to get the emperor to like her ; but Napoleon was deaf to all persuasion. Josephine sometimes ascended the little staircase leading from her own suite of apartments and came and knocked at the door of his study. One day when I happened to be alone I myself went to open the door ; I was told to inform *Bonaparte* that Mme. Grant was downstairs and to beg him to listen to her for a minute. Napoleon eventually allowed himself to be persuaded to grant her an audience."[3] The old mistress of the Foreign Minister was also a friend, as Méneval tells us, of Mme. Bonaparte ; the latter's indulgence for her female friend's little failings

[1] *Mémoires de Mme. de Rémusat*, Vol. II, p. 177.
[2] *Mémoires du duc de Rovigo*, Vol. I, p. 427.
[3] *Mémoires de Mme. de Rémusat*, Vol. II, p. 177.

helped to increase her reputation for good-nature. But had she the right to be severe and strict? At all events, she never was strict. At last the First Consul descended to his wife's suite of apartments, where he found Mme. Grant.[1] The Minister's mistress threw herself at his feet, burst into tears, begged and implored him to help her and finished by extorting from the First Consul, if not a promise of help, at least a promise that he would not go against her. After she had left La Malmaison, Bonaparte remarked "that this woman had just proved to him that necessity makes even the stupidest women eloquent."[2] Without Josephine's help, Mme. Grant would never have been able to get her *liaison* with the prince de Bénévent converted into a marriage blessed by Mother Church. As for M. de Talleyrand, who always knew how to get himself out of a tight corner, he justified his choice, or rather his lack of moral dignity, when he said:

"A clever wife often compromises her husband, whereas a stupid wife only compromises herself."[3] That was a witty way of bearing one's misfortunes, or rather one's wife, patiently.

As for the public, it made great fun over this ill-assorted pair, and the following epigram was heard all over Paris:

> "Blanchette a quarante ans, le teint pâle et plombé,
> Blanchette cependant a épousé un noble abbé.
> Pourquoi s'en étonner? Quand chacun la délaisse,
> Toute catin se range et devient mère abbesse."[4]

[1] *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Napoléon Ier* (Dentu, 1894), Vol. II, p. 415.

[2] *Mémoires du chancelier Pasquier*, Vol. I, p. 251.

[3] Pichot, *Souvenirs intimes de M. de Talleyrand*, p. 28.

[4] "Forty years have left poor Blanchette thin and sallow,
But Blanchette finds a husband in a noble *abbé*.
Why should we smile? When other lovers fly from her,
The frailest of the fair can still become a mother-abbess."

Winter had now begun. The First Consul and Mme. Bonaparte, having passed the greater part of the summer at La Malmaison, returned to Paris. Hardly had they settled at the Tuileries when people began to talk under their breath of new plots against the life of the First Consul, and Mme. Bonaparte, who was informed by her waiting-women of whatever was said in town, was again tormented by anxiety.

Haydn's *Creation* was to be given at the Opera on the 3rd *nivôse ;* Garat was to sing in the oratorio with Mme. Barbier-Valbonne, and Steibelt had specially arranged all the orchestral parts for the Opera orchestra. The house was full. All Paris of the *an* VIII was there. The First Consul's box was the only empty one in the whole house. The performers waited for the arrival of General Bonaparte and his wife. Suddenly a loud explosion like a cannon going off was heard ; the entire audience sprang up. While many people rushed out of the opera-house in order to discover what had happened, the door of the First Consul's box opened and he himself appeared, accompanied by generals Lannes, Bessières, Lauriston and Duroc. While he was bowing and smiling his thanks to the excited audience, Mme. Bonaparte also entered, accompanied by her daughter, Colonel Rapp and Mme. Murat, who was then in an interesting condition.

They had just escaped a horrible death.

This is what had happened. General Bonaparte had got into his carriage with Generals Lannes and Bessières and his aide-de-camp Lebrun, son of the second consul, in order to drive to the opera-house. Mme. Bonaparte had already descended the stairs and was about to get into her carriage which was to follow immediately behind

that of the First Consul when Colonel Rapp, who, although he was very fond of the fair sex,[1] knew next to nothing about female fashions, took it into his head that Mme. Bonaparte's shawl, a magnificent present from Constantinople which she was wearing for the first time, was not draped properly. Mme. Bonaparte then requested Rapp to drape it over her shoulders as the Egyptian women wear their shawls. The time spent over this little operation saved the lives of four persons: Mme. Bonaparte, her daughter, Mme. Murat and Rapp. The First Consul's carriage had started as soon as the door was shut, and the barrel of gunpowder lying on the cart standing in the rue Saint-Nicaise, exploded after the first carriage had passed and before the second had reached the spot.[2]

The whole audience soon heard the news of this horrible attempt. So when the First Consul entered, everybody turned towards him and applauded him who had just had such a narrow escape. An eye-witness[3] of this scene said that the audience, by their applause, showed their affection for him. Had not Mme. Bonaparte completely lost her head, she might have seen and enjoyed, as her husband and Mme. Murat did, the great affection manifested for the First Consul by all Paris. But she seemed to have lost all control over herself, and she nearly fainted in her carriage; her features became distorted and she was seized with a sort of nervous tremor. The poor creature was not made to play the part of a heroine under trying circumstances. She burst into tears.

[1] See *Mémoires de Mlle. Avrillon*, Vol. I, p. 42.

[2] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Les Salons de Paris*, Vol. III, p. 56. *Mémoires du général Rapp*, Paris, 1823, p. 20. *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, Vol. I, pp. 301–2. [3] *Mémoires de la duchesse d'Abrantès*, Vol. III, p. 93.

On the morrow the First Consul, who on the previous evening had had an interview with the head of the police, sent for that individual to come to the Tuileries. Fouché had just learnt that the little François (Carbon) had been arrested, so he despatched M. Réal[1] to inform General Bonaparte of that event. The First Consul was convinced that the criminal attempt of the previous evening was the work of those whom he called the Jacobins, whereas Fouché was equally certain that the royalists alone were guilty. Circumstances showed that Fouché was right. But Mme. Bonaparte, whose *protégé* Fouché was, and who " was even very fond of him,"[2] feared that he would lose his position on account of this attempt, so she did her best to protect him whenever the First Consul seemed inclined to blame him.

The Tuileries were crowded with visitors that evening ; among their number were Rœderer, Portalis, Regnault de Saint-Jean d'Angély. Mme. Bonaparte was seated in the *salon* surrounded by a group of ladies composed of Mme. de Crény, Mme. Miot, etc. When Rœderer tried to throw all the blame of the criminal attempt of the previous evening upon the shoulders of the head of the police who, he said, *ought to have known* what was going to happen, Mme. Bonaparte complained, after he had gone, that her friend Fouché had been attacked and she said crossly that " the danger lay in listening to certain *sycophants* (meaning Rœderer), who advised Bonaparte to assume too much power and had tried to make him divorce her." In speaking thus, Mme. Bonaparte showed her royalist tendencies, her friendship (interested, it is true) for

[1] *Bourrienne et ses erreurs*, Vol. II, p. 70.
[2] *Mémoires de la duchesse d'Abrantès*, Vol. III, p. 123.

Fouché, and her perpetual dread of her husband allowing himself to be persuaded to divorce her. What would she have said if she had known that M. de Talleyrand had advised the First Consul to have Fouché arrested (as people said he had done), and to have him shot, him the regicide, as if he were a mere Bourbon ? Her speech was repeated to Rœderer on the morrow ; it was evidently aimed at him, although his name was not mentioned. He took offence and kept away from the Tuileries for some time. He finally yielded to the repeated invitations of the First Consul, who knew nothing about the incident and was surprised to notice that Rœderer refused to come to the Tuileries. However, he went to dine there one day, the 19th *nivôse*, when he heard Bonaparte, during dinner, utter this speech, which he was careful to note down on returning home :

" It means ruin to a State when women take the lead in public affairs. France was ruined by a woman. . . . Look at Spain : a queen rules there. As for me, if my wife wished me to do one thing, I should immediately do exactly the opposite of what she wanted me to do."[1] And Mme. Bonaparte was near enough to hear this

[1] *Mémoires de Rœderer*, Vol. III, p. 366. " He often reverted to the fact that it was very unfortunate that women in France were allowed to have so much influence in public matters, and that their fondness for luxury and extravagance should work such ruin in domestic life. ' Women,' said he, ' are at the bottom of all intrigues ; they ought to be made to stay at home ; the *salons* of the government ought to be closed to them. They ought to be forbidden to appear in public except wearing a black skirt and a veil or with the *mezzaro*, as worn by the women of Genoa and Venice.' " (Arnault, *Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire*, Vol. IV, p. 104). In so saying, Napoleon probably remembered his wife's foolish extravagance in dress-matters ; had she worn a plain black skirt and a veil, she would have certainly cost less to keep.

speech, which perhaps reminded her that her husband did not wish her to meddle with politics; it also showed Rœderer that the First Consul would have no pity upon Mme. Bonaparte's friends when the country's welfare was at stake.

Josephine, as we have already seen, had taken Fouché's part very warmly. In doing so, she had no wish to meddle with politics, for which she did not care and which only bored her; neither did she speak thus because she was in love with Fouché, who was no longer young and had never been handsome; neither was it because he was her friend, for it was not likely that friendship, at least not a great friendship, could exist between two such opposite characters. So she had some other reason for defending this man; and the warmth with which she espoused his cause when Rœderer spoke of his want of foresight, rather confirms the rumour then being circulated, to wit: that she received certain sums of money derived from taxes levied on gaming-houses as a reward for her services, and that Fouché always gave her the money with his own hand,[1] or else made Mme. de Copons,[2] the widow of a former magistrate at Perpignan and related in some way to Mme. Bonaparte,[3] give it to her.

Always short of money notwithstanding the fact that her husband made her a handsome allowance, always in danger of being submerged by the incoming tide of ever-increasing debts, Mme. Bonaparte, who borrowed money from Ouvrard[4]—everybody, Ouvrard included, knew

[1] Th. Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 294.

[2] Léonce Pingaud, *Un agent secret sous la Révolution et l'Empire : Le comte d'Antraigues*, p. 267. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 253.

[4] *Mémoires de Bourrienne*, Vol. VII, p. 97.

what borrowing meant in her case—Mme. Bonaparte actually received the sum of *one thousand* francs a day from Fouché for keeping him constantly advised as to what was going on inside the palace.[1]

Did she not also make money out of her influence during the *Directoire* while her husband was in Egypt?[2] She was so fond of pretty clothes, fine hats, wastefulness, extravagance! And yet she could not bear her husband to remonstrate with her or to scold her when the tradespeople clamoured to be paid and forced her to tell Bonaparte of her debts and wanton wastefulness—and she always hid part of those debts from him! And yet, notwithstanding all this, she could not contrive to keep out of debt.

Fouché, who was not the sort of man to give something and expect nothing in return, found it worth his while to supply Josephine with funds; he knew how to make her speak and tell him whatever he wanted to learn. What a strange position was this for Josephine to be in: at the head of Fouché's gang of spies! Ah! if the First Consul had known that his adorable Josephine had consented to stoop so low! . . . Although some may say that this was impossible, that Fouché was not rich enough to finance the wife of the First Consul and that he could not touch the public funds because the budget belonging to his ministry was under the ever-watchful eye of Bonaparte, we must remember that M. Dubois, who was prefect of the police during the Consulate and occupied that post until 1810, and who was well known for his "valuable qualities,"[3] received a monthly salary

[1] *Mémoires de Fouché*, Vol. I, p. 177.
[2] *Mémoires de Mme. de Rémusat*, Vol. I, p. 178.
[3] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 54.

FOUCHÉ, DUC D'OTRANTE
From an engraving

of 5000 francs, derived from taxes levied upon gaming-houses, as a bribe, and that without anybody being aware of the fact.[1] Now Fouché was not prefect but superintendent of the police and he had, we may be sure, similar mysterious resources which enabled him to recompense his police and detective forces, equally shameful professions, well fitted to be paid with this dirty money, which items he forbore to mention on his list of expenditure. But this sleuth-hound, who likewise took Bourrienne into his employ with a salary of 25,000 francs a month, did a really masterful stroke of business when he engaged Mme. Bonaparte's services as a spy upon the First Consul's comings and goings. "In this way," says Fouché, "I was able to verify the secretary's information by comparing it with Josephine's revelations and vice-versa. . . . So I was always well informed."[2]

The First Consul did not wish to keep Fouché at the head of the police after the attempt which he had not been sharp enough to foresee. Mme. Bonaparte did not learn of the Minister's disgrace until it was made public: no one was more distressed than she by the news.[3] She had good cause to be distressed, for it meant that the nice little salary which Fouché had lately been paying her would come to an end. In short, in order to comfort him in his disgrace, she sent him a present of some merino sheep which somebody had just given her and which she did not know what to do with at the farm adjoining the *château* of La Malmaison. Fouché did not seem very grateful for this gift; in short, he soon quite forgot that

[1] Chancelier Pasquier, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 429.

[2] *Mémoires de Fouché*, Vol. I, p. 189.

[3] *Mémoires de Bourrienne*, Vol. V, p. 39. Bourrienne must have been equally distressed.

she had once been his friend, and a year later he said straight out :

" It is to be hoped that the Empress will die soon ; her death would solve many difficulties."[1] It was he who, in 1809, was the principal factor in her divorce.

[1] *Mémoires de Bourrienne*, Vol. VI, p. 296.

CHAPTER V

Bonaparte is made consul for life—Grief of Josephine and delight of the Bonaparte family—Josephine's selfish fears—The question of heredity—More family squabbles—" We must not always speak the truth "—A dangerous topic of conversation—Josephine and Lucien—Another journey to Plombières—Politics and silken robes —Fashions—Arrest of the duc d'Enghien—Josephine's anxiety—She pleads for the duc d'Enghien—Fresh endeavours—Murat—Josephine sheds tears on learning of the death of the last of the Condés—Sad days at La Malmaison—" We must make the people forget this event "—Josephine's joy—Lucien marries Mme. Jouberthon—Bonaparte's grief—Josephine comforts him—Gossip.

THE day when Bonaparte was proclaimed consul for life was a memorable but a sad day in the life of Josephine. The great rooms in the Tuileries were filled with a richly-dressed throng ; numberless generals, officers and high officials, sauntered through the *salons ;* each one imparted to his neighbour a hope that the present state of affairs would last ; everybody congratulated everybody else upon the fact that France now possessed as its permanent ruler a man who, in a very short space of time, had raised her up from a state of desolation and placed a crown of glory on her head. All the members of the Bonaparte family were delighted. Josephine was the only person who did not seem to share in these universal rejoicings. M. Thiers says :

" Of all the members of the Bonaparte family, Mme. Bonaparte was the most interesting because she did not

share their ambitions ; in fact, she dreaded them." Yes, she dreaded their ambitions, but her reasons for doing so neither deserve M. Thiers' praise nor the interest he takes in her. Josephine was afraid, not that her husband, in his wild ambition, would try to abolish the Republic in order to substitute his own absolute power under some fancy title or the other ; she had no fears for France's safety ; no, she was afraid for herself, for her own position ; she was afraid that her husband, tired of a wife who had borne him no children to whom he might have bequeathed his heritage of glory and who would have enabled him to found a dynasty now that the consulate for life, " big with possibilities for the future," as they said at the time,[1] would give him the right to choose his successor and would familiarize the nation with the idea of a dynasty—she was afraid that her husband would divorce her in order to marry again. That is the reason why Josephine did not share in the rejoicings of the Bonaparte family ; it was not, as we see, because she was fired with any desire to sacrifice herself and her own personal ambition to the greater interest of France. As Bourrienne said : " She seemed to think that every step the First Consul took nearer the throne took him farther away from her,"[2] and then it would be farewell to her position, adieu to her mad extravagance, her finery, her beautiful costumes, her gorgeous bonnets, farewell to the life of ease and luxury with no thought for the morrow ! This is all very unromantic, very commonplace, very selfish, but it was exactly what this unfortunate creature thought. Hitherto

[1] Stanislas Girardin, *Journal et Souvenirs*, Vol. I, p. 271.
[2] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. V, p. 116.

she had been buoyed up by the hope that her husband, as she had borne him no children, would adopt his step-son Eugène or the little Napoleon, Hortense's son ; but when he became consul for life, this illusion faded away into the past and the spectre of a divorce returned to haunt her day and night. Did not the exuberant delight of her brothers and sisters-in-law and, indeed, of her husband's whole family, betoken this tragic event ?

The First Consul was in doubt as to whether he ought to attribute to his wife or to himself the fact that they had no children. He had had several mistresses, including the pretty Pauline Fourès, whom he had taken from her husband, a captain in a regiment of light horse, during his sojourn in Egypt, a young woman who had been nicknamed *Bellilotte* (her maiden name was Bellisle) by the staff, and who also went by the name of *Our Lady of the East.* This woman, after a long life of adventures, died in Paris not so very long ago at a great age. M. Frédéric Masson[1] tells us that she became an intimate friend of Mlle. Rosa Bonheur. No child had been born of this *liaison.* So Bonaparte was beginning to fear that he would have no son, and his brothers thought the same. Mme. Bonaparte, as we can easily imagine, did her best to encourage this idea, which favoured her plans ; but her sisters-in-law, who did not see things in the same light as their brothers (doubtless because they knew nothing about General Bonaparte's *liaison* with Mme. Fourès), but well aware that Josephine did not like the subject to be mentioned, took a spiteful pleasure in discussing it in her presence whenever an opportunity occurred to do so. Josephine was all the more annoyed

[1] Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et les femmes.*

because she knew perfectly well why they chose this topic of conversation ; and these little acts of sisterly kindness were not calculated to calm her dread of a divorce. One day when these cunning minxes were talking of her unfortunate childlessness and seemed to reproach her for that fact, she turned round upon them and said :

" But you forget that I have already had two children : are not Eugène and Hortense my children ? "

Whereupon Mme. Baciocchi, " who had the sharpest tongue any woman ever possessed,"[1] charitably retorted :

" But, sister, you were a young woman in those days ! "[2]

Elisa was quite right : Josephine was young in those days and she was no now longer young. But Elisa's impudent, spiteful retort shows exactly how much these ladies loved one another and what sort of affection existed between the Bonapartes and the Beauharnais. Her sister-in-law loved her for this speech as she deserved to be loved ; as she always wept at the slightest provocation, she could not restrain her tears. The First Consul appeared in the middle of these affecting scenes.

" What's the matter ? Why are you crying ? "

Josephine managed to tell him through her sobs what had just happened. Whereupon the general, in order to smooth matters, said to his sister :

" How stupid you are ! Don't you know that we must not always speak the truth ? "

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 82.

[2] What would Mme. Baciocchi have said if she had known that Josephine had had a daughter in 1788 while she was separated from her husband and that she had gone to Martinique for its birth ? This daughter Josephine, in 1805, married to an officer. (See in the *Revue de Paris* an article by M. Frédéric Masson on " Josephine avant Bonaparte).

Lucien, in relating this incident, adds that Mme. Bonaparte seemed to think that her husband's remark had only made matters worse.[1]

In short, Josephine's inability to give General Bonaparte a son and heir became a question of State; the question of succession was as important as if the present political régime had already given place to a monarchy. The First Consul frequently discussed the subject with the members of his family with a frankness which is not usually met with in polite society. One day he said:

"I have no children to succeed me. You say" (pointing to his brothers) "that I shall never have any. I do not think that Josephine, notwithstanding her wish to do so, is capable of giving me a son."

The First Consul said this, "half laughing, half in joke, in Josephine's presence, without caring who heard him, before Murat, Davout, Lannes, Duroc, Savary and perhaps several others."[2]

Then Lucien Bonaparte turned to his sister-in-law.

"Come, sister," said he, "show the Consul that he is mistaken; make haste and give us a little Cæsar!"

Mme. Bonaparte laughed from time to time during this rather risky conversation; but she enjoyed spicy stories, and Cardinal Maury, well aware of this fact, often used to tell her anecdotes "which made her laugh until the tears ran down her cheeks."[3] At all events, she felt grateful to her enemy Lucien for his good-natured, if not very witty, remark.

It was doubtless this little scene, very unimportant in itself notwithstanding the First Consul's rather peculiar

[1] Th. Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 69.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 131.
[3] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Histoire des salons de Paris*, Vol. III, p. 77.

remarks, which Josephine completely misinterpreted, as she was so fond of doing, although she *was* so very good-natured, when she related it to her friend Bourrienne.

Before relating it himself, Bourrienne ought to have recollected that Josephine, as we have already seen on more than one occasion, "lied whenever it suited her to do so."[1] Here is his version of the episode:

"Two days before starting for Plombières, Mme. Bonaparte sent for me. I found her in tears. 'Oh! what a creature—what a creature that Lucien is!' cried she in her despair. 'If you only knew, my friend, what abominable advice he has just dared to give me. "You are going to drink the waters?" said he to me. "Well, as he has given you no son, you must have one by somebody else."—Just think what my feelings were when I heard this shameful speech.—"Well," continued he, "if you will not or cannot, Bonaparte must have a child by another woman, and you must adopt it, because it is absolutely necessary for him to have a successor; it is to your interest for him to have a son and you ought to know why."—"What! sir," said I to him; "do you suppose that the nation would allow a bastard to govern it? Oh! Lucien, Lucien! you will be the ruin of your brother! It is awful! I am indeed much to be pitied if you can find it in your heart to suspect for one moment that I should listen to your infamous proposals without experiencing feelings of horror! Your mind must be positively corrupt to say such things!"—"Well," he retorted, "what can you expect, madame? What can I say except that I pity you from the bottom of my heart."'"[2]

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 418.
[2] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. V, p. 22.

It is evident that this scene, as related by Josephine to Bourrienne, is the same related much more simply by Lucien; we are constrained to accept Lucien's version. So the question of a successor had been mooted.[1] Josephine, unable to provide an heir to her husband, in her desire to give vent to her ill-temper, slandered her brothers-in-law, and particularly Lucien, whom she detested; she invented the most horrible stories about him.[2] Afterwards, at the time of the coronation, she did not hesitate to invent even more odious stories concerning Napoleon and his sisters, and Pauline in particular. These stories were circulated, it is true, for they were repeated to many persons whose word we can believe. But who repeated them? Josephine. Now we know, thanks to the duchesse d'Abrantès, that we must not believe Josephine's assertions. How were these stories first circulated? Under the influence of jealousy, hatred and malice. Can we possibly believe these detestable inventions of an unscrupulous woman?

. . . Notumque furens quid femina possit

said Virgil; we must never forget these words when we hear or read the assertions of an angry woman.

We may be sure that, as the public took such a keen

[1] "There are only three solutions

"First, by having a child.

"Secondly, by divorcing his wife if she cannot give him a child.

"Thirdly, by adopting a child.

"Mme. Bonaparte renders the first solution quite impossible; she seems to dread the second; therefore we may rest assured that he will choose the third.

"In short, people believe that it is the Consul's intention to adopt one of Hortense's sons" (Stanislas Girardin, *Journal et Souvenirs*, Vol. I, p. 271).

[2] See pages 246 and 252.

interest in the question of a successor, this question must have been discussed by the *Conseil d'Etat* which had lately passed the law submitted for its approval by a majority of ten votes against seven ; but the First Consul had already suffered defeat on one occasion concerning this question ; so he postponed the execution of his plans until another occasion.

While the Bonaparte family, the First Consul and the public authorities were trying to find a solution to the question of a successor, rendered all-important by Josephine's inability to provide an heir, Dr. Corvisart sent her to Plombières. She had already done one cure there after General Bonaparte's departure for Egypt ; and then she had begun her flirtation with M. Charles at La Malmaison without any other result than a great deal of scandal in Paris and a terrible scene on the return of General Bonaparte, a scene which had nearly led to a divorce. So she had no great faith in a treatment which, three years ago, had been unsuccessful. However, she went to Plombières, as much in order to quiet her conscience as to show that she was willing to do everything she could to satisfy her husband's very natural wish. The latter, while his wife was getting ready to start, contrary to his custom made sundry very unseemly remarks concerning " the uselessness of sending women on long journeys to watering-places when it was already too late in the day," etc. etc.

Mme. Bonaparte started for Plombières with Mme. Bonaparte *mère,* her grave mother-in-law, who felt strangely lost amid the lively group which travelled with them ; there were also a few ladies belonging to the rising young court, and Lavalette and Rapp.

Bourrienne is mistaken when he says that Hortense also accompanied her mother. She remained at La Malmaison in order to do the honours of her stepfather's house and to enable several ladies to stay at the *château* which they could not have done had there been no mistress of the house to receive them.

Bonaparte often displayed interest in his wife's wardrobe ;[1] but in 1803, he displayed still more interest in our manufactories and he encouraged our silk manufacturers, and especially those of Lyons, to compete with those of England. It was the fashion in those days to wear Indian muslin, and so there was scarcely any demand for the beautiful silken goods made at Lyons. The First Consul admired the superb taffeta silks and beautiful satins of that town, and declared that he infinitely preferred to see women wear coloured costumes with plenty of material in them, to the Grecian fashions and flimsy Indian muslin robes, those ugly, skimpy garments in which any woman, who did not happen to be shaped like a Juno, looked positively hideous, and which made France dependent upon England. As Josephine was rather inclined to prefer English materials, a discussion arose between the First Consul and his wife, which ended in the First Consul commanding his wife never again to appear in the dress which she was then wearing and which was made of Indian muslin. He added that he should like her to wear a satin dress at the next reception of the ambassadors and the diplomatic corps. This was a terrible blow to the poor woman ; she sank down on a sofa, burst into tears and was obliged to hide her face in her handkerchief.

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. III, p. 289.

General Bonaparte was no longer the lover of 1796, of the old days of the *armée d'Italie*. His wife's tears were now powerless to move him; on the contrary, they only annoyed him, so he left the room in a temper, saying:

"There! do as you like, but remember that you are no longer fifteen or even thirty years of age and that you are much too old to play the child like that!"[1]

By this speech General Bonaparte expressed his indignation at seeing his wife try to play the little girl and at her inability to understand that women, by wearing silk dresses, would benefit trade considerably; but this speech only increased Josephine's grief; she wept more and more, and her tears were all the more bitter because her young sister-in-law, that little plague Pauline, who could not bear her, had been present during the conversation and was too much of a woman not to take a spiteful pleasure in seeing her thus mortified. At last Hortense appeared upon the scene and comforted her poor mama in her childish sorrow.

We must not attribute the fact that the First Consul hated Greek fashions to the dislike which he had taken to Mme. Tallien ever since her marriage. He certainly had very good reasons for not allowing Josephine to continue to receive Mme. Tallien, to whom, however, he owed a certain amount of gratitude for the protection which she had accorded to him in 1795, before *Vendémiaire*. So, as Mme. Tallien, ever since the First Consul had taken it into his head to choose his wife's friends for her, no longer went to the Tuileries (not openly, at least, for Josephine never really obeyed her husband's orders), she, in the spirit of opposition, paid no attention

[1] Th. Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 369.

to the First Consul's wishes that silken materials should be worn in Paris. Those women who did not go to the Tuileries and who were beautiful enough to wear Greek fashions continued to wear them. The faubourg Saint-Germain took care to seize this opportunity openly to show its hostility to the government, and also kept to this fashion; but those ladies who were either too thin or too fat, too short or too tall, and all those whose figures left something to be desired, soon adopted the fashion of wearing silks and satins. Quantities of trimmings, such as ribbons, flowers, plumes, lace, etc., were worn and helped to conceal any physical defects which these Spartan fashions would only have accentuated. So, within a very short time, in spite of political reasons, not a woman in Paris would be seen in a Greek costume or tunic; and so Josephine no longer cried because she had to wear a silk dress.

The year 1804 was heralded by certain threatening presages. France which, however, had never been so prosperous, again seemed about to be disturbed by sinister events. Nobody talked of anything except con spiracies; people whispered to one another that plots had been formed against the First Consul's life and that the assassins had laid their plans so skilfully this time that he could not possibly escape. General Murat had just succeeded General Junot in the post of Governor of Paris and a very strict watch was being kept, not only over the capital, but over the whole country.

Suddenly people heard a mysterious report that a little English boat manned by the chief conspirators had just landed at the foot of a cliff off Biville, in Normandy. Two days later everybody declared that these conspirators

were in league with some person whose identity was still uncertain, but who was supposed to be of exalted birth: it was thought that this individual might be the duc d'Enghien.

Everybody knows the story of General Moreau's arrest; Pichegru was arrested fourteen days later, and on March 9th, the dramatic arrest of George took place. Events followed one another with inconceivable rapidity. Paris was absolutely stupefied.

On the evening before the arrest of Moreau took place, the First Consul told Josephine that he had given orders that the general was to be arrested. He had not been able to close his eyes that night; he had not gone to bed, but had paced up and down his room. Matters looked very bad and everybody was excited. On the following morning, Josephine who, like her husband, had been unable to sleep and who, what is more, had been crying, got out of bed with red eyes. Bonaparte took her by the chin and lifted up her face until he could look into her eyes.

"Come," said he, "it is not everybody who has such a good wife as I have! You are crying, Josephine! Ah! why? Are you afraid?"

"No, but I don't like to think what people will say."

"But, what can you do in the matter?"[1]

The arrest of M. de Polignac, M. de Rivière, M. d'Hozier and several other gentlemen showed the public, which was already excited by divers feelings and torn by party spirit, that the conspiracy was a royalist plot.

This important case was still being examined when the First Consul and his wife went to La Malmaison after

[1] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 302.

hearing mass at the Tuileries, March 18th. They intended to spend a week there. Mme. Bonaparte was thankful to leave Paris, where recent events had aroused, not only the populace, but the army also, to an extraordinary pitch of excitement; "she was nervous." Mme. de Rémusat was the only lady in the carriage with her. As Josephine was silent and seemed worried, even depressed, Mme. de Rémusat expressed her anxiety; it is she who tells us what happened at La Malmaison during those few sad days. Josephine looked at her for a minute as if she were afraid to speak, and then said:

"I am going to tell you a great secret. This morning Bonaparte told me that he had sent M. de Caulaincourt to the frontier with orders to seize the duc d'Enghien. He is to be brought here."

"Oh! heavens!" cried Mme. de Rémusat, "and what are they going to do with him?"

"I fancy he is going to be tried."[1]

Mme. de Rémusat was positively dismayed at the thought that a prince of the house of Bourbon was about to be arrested and tried; and she could not help thinking of the fate of Louis XVI; the fact that the comte d'Artois had bribed assassins to murder the First Consul, the state of exasperation of the populace, the knowledge that a foreign territory had been invaded in order to seize the prince, gave everybody cause to believe that the sentence would be very severe. Mme. Bonaparte, noticing that her companion had turned suddenly pale, immediately let down the window to give her a little air, saying:

"I have done my best to get Bonaparte to promise that the prince shall not perish, but I much fear that

[1] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I.

he has already made up his mind as to what he is going to do."

"What! do you think that he will have him executed?"

"I fear so."[1]

Then Mme. de Rémusat began to cry. Here was the First Consul whom she admired, whom she positively worshipped, ready to stain his laurels with blood, the blood of a Condé! She saw that this crime would cause party hatred to spring into life again; she imagined that this execution would herald disasters of all sorts. And then she imparted all her fears for the future to the wife of the First Consul. Now Josephine, on hearing what her husband had to say on the matter, had not thought much of the arrest of this conspirator who happened to be of nobler birth than his fellow-plotters; however, she was much struck by Mme. de Rémusat's speech and by her very sincere grief; this impressionable creature became terrified at the prospect of the very possible and probable consequences which had just been revealed to her and which surpassed everything she, in her short-sightedness, had ever imagined. When she alighted from her carriage at La Malmaison, she was quite as unhappy as her companion. The latter, as soon as she reached La Malmaison, ran and shut herself up in her own room; Mme. Bonaparte had entreated her not to let the First Consul see that she had confided her secret to her. Josephine, for her part, intended to try and persuade her husband to be merciful. She made the attempt but was unsuccessful.

Bonaparte said:

[1] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I.

" Women must not meddle with such matters. This *coup d'etat* is necessary to my political plans."

Mme. Bonaparte then thought it her duty to remark how unfortunate it was that he had chosen M. de Caulaincourt to carry out the transaction.[1] Did he not know that the de Caulaincourt family were old servitors of the house of Condé ?

" I was not aware of that fact," answered Bonaparte ; " but, then, what does it matter ? If he is compromised, so much the better for me. . . ."

It was a long, sad day for Mme. Bonaparte. Mme. de Rémusat's speech had made her very uncomfortable, and now her husband's refusal to listen to her advice had reduced her to a state of utter misery. Not knowing what to do in order to pass the time, she went into the park and gave orders for a cypress tree to be transplanted from one part of the grounds to another. A hole had to be dug to receive the cypress. It was all very depressing and still more so when, the roots of the tree having been arranged in the hole, Mme. Bonaparte threw in a few shovelfuls of earth so that she might be able to say that she had planted the tree herself.

" Ah ! madame," cried Mme. de Rémusat, as she stood watching her mistress at work, " a cypress is a mighty suitable tree for such a day as to-day ! "

However, as Mme. Bonaparte never felt anything for very long at a time, especially if it happened to be some-

[1] M. de Caulaincourt was only a tool in Bonaparte's hand ; he knew nothing of the rôle which the latter had chosen him to fill. He had no cause to reproach himself for his share in the matter. He was afterwards able to clear himself of all blame. The position of equerry which he accepted later was certainly not meant as a reward for his services in Bavaria.

thing disagreeable, she soon forgot the duc d'Enghien and his arrest; but Mme. de Rémusat did not forget. She tried to reawaken her mistress's fears concerning the deplorable consequences which the execution of such an illustrious prisoner was bound to produce; she implored her to do something; she burst into tears. At last Mme. Bonaparte promised to make one more effort to soften the First Consul's heart. She kept her word; "she made him, nay, she almost forced him to open the door to her." History ought to be grateful to her for her conduct in this affair and for her efforts to influence the First Consul for good, efforts which, when we remember her indolent nature, one would have thought her incapable of making. A very angry scene took place between her and her husband; he would say nothing except:

"Go away! You are a silly child. You don't know anything about politics!"[1]

"Very well," said Josephine as she withdrew, "very well, Bonaparte; if you murder your prisoner, you yourself will perish by the guillotine as my first husband perished and as I, too, shall perish in order to keep you company."[2]

On the following morning, March 20th, she again saw Mme. de Rémusat.

"It is no good," said she; "the duc d'Enghien arrives this evening. He will be taken to Vincennes and tried this very night. Murat is going to manage everything. He is behaving abominably. It is he who is urging Bonaparte to be severe; he keeps on saying that people

[1] Chancelier Pasquier, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 194.

[2] Th. Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 431.

will think that he is weak if he is merciful, and that the Jacobins will be furious. A certain party says that he ought to have remembered Moreau's brave conduct in the past, and they want to know why a Bourbon is to be treated with more leniency. Bonaparte mentioned your name to me," she then added ; " I confessed that I had told you everything. He had noticed how sad you seemed. Try and hide your feelings."

It was not true, as Mme. Bonaparte said, that Murat urged the First Consul to be severe and that he was guilty of such abominable behaviour. On the contrary, Murat only acted with great reluctance ; he refused to obey the first orders sent to him by his brother-in-law, and he actually said once to some of his intimate friends :

" Do they want to tarnish my uniform ? Well, I shall not allow them to do so ! "[1]

The friendship which had existed between Mme. Bonaparte and General and Mme. Murat after the latter's marriage, a marriage which she had helped to bring about, had not been of long duration. Mme. Murat hated her sister-in-law, and Murat, who was completely under his wife's thumb, was obliged to follow suit : however, for the sake of the First Consul and in order to save appearances, they pretended to be on good terms ; but Josephine, who was not above back-biting, notwithstanding her reputation for good-nature, never let an occasion pass, as we know, in which to slander the Murats. The report that Murat " behaved abominably " in the case of the duc d'Enghien was utterly false ; because he, well aware of the infamous crime which his brother-in-law was about to perpetrate, took care to prevent his former

[1] *Mémoires du chancelier Pasquier*, Vol. I, p. 192.

aide-de-camp, Colonel Auguste Colbert, a very honourable young fellow, from being obliged either to assist at the prince's trial, which Murat knew he would be called upon to do, or else, by his refusal, draw down punishment upon himself. In short, on March 20th, he warned him " not to be at home on that date and not to say where he was going."[1] Colbert took his advice without troubling himself to ascertain the reason, and was afterwards very grateful to Murat for having warned him.

Mme. de Rémusat still urged Mme. Bonaparte to intercede with her husband in favour of the duc d'Enghien ; she deserves nearly all the merit for this intervention which alas ! was doomed to failure ; she was so distressed that her good-natured but thoughtless mistress could not help remarking her sad face and said in a tone of astonishment :

" Calm yourself—try and calm yourself. Do not give way to your grief so ! "

Whereupon Mme. de Rémusat replied :

" Ah ! madame, you do not understand me ! "

The dinner-hour struck. The ghost of the man who was so soon to be nothing but a corpse seemed to hover round the table where the little party sat depressed and dreading the solemn events which everybody knew were about to take place.

On rising from dinner, the First Consul went into the *salon* and began to play with the little Napoleon, the son of Louis and Hortense. Josephine, reassured by her husband's apparent cheerfulness, watched him for a few minutes and then turned to Mme de Rémusat with an

[1] *Traditions et souvenirs touchant le temps du général Auguste Colbert,* by the marquis de Colbert-Chabanais, Vol. II, p. 150.

expression on her face as if she wished to say : " You see that he is not so wicked as you think. Don't be afraid—everything will come right in the end."

However, Mme. de Rémusat still looked very depressed. The First Consul noticed this fact and said to her :

" Why have you not rouged to-day ? You are too pale."

And when the young woman said that she had forgotten to put on her rouge, he said with a laugh :

" What ! is it possible that women ever forget to rouge ? Such a thing could never happen to you, Josephine ! " And then he added : " There are two things which are always very becoming to women : rouge and tears."

After having paid this pretty little compliment to his Josephine, who was much too fond of both rouge and tears, Bonaparte began to play with his wife in a very free and easy manner " just as if nobody else was present." And then they all retired to rest.

The First Consul awoke about five o'clock the next morning and remarked to his wife who was lying by his side :

" The duc d'Enghien must be dead by now."

At this she began to groan and to cry most bitterly, whereupon the First Consul added very sharply :

" There, there ! try and go to sleep again. You are nothing but a child ! "[1]

General Savary entered the *salon* of La Malmaison later that same morning. Mme. de Rémusat joined him almost immediately ; she thought him looking pale and distressed. Neither of them uttered a word : her mistress

[1] Chancelier Pasquier, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 194.

had just told her the fatal news. Mme. Bonaparte appeared at that moment.

"Well," said she sadly, with a gesture of despair, "is it all over?"

"Yes, madame," answered General Savary; "he died this morning, and I must confess that he died like a brave man."

Mme. Bonaparte then begged him to give her some details concerning the prince's death. Savary told her everything in a few touching sentences; he showed her a ring, a lock of hair and a letter which the victim had confided to the care of the officer who was guarding him, begging him at the same time to send these articles and this letter, which was not sealed, to the princesse de Rohan-Rochefort.[1]

Visitors flocked to La Malmaison throughout the morning. Eugène de Beauharnais was the first to appear; on alighting from his carriage he learnt "that the prince had been arrested, tried and executed. My mother," says he, "was dissolved in tears and bitterly reproached the First Consul who listened to her in silence. She told him that he had committed an atrocious crime from which he would never be able to clear himself, that he had listened to the treacherous advice of his own enemies who were delighted to be able to tarnish the record of his life-story by this horrible incident. The First Consul retired to his study and, a few minutes later, Caulaincourt, who had just returned from Strasburg, appeared. He was surprised to see my mother's great

[1] Mme. Bonaparte *mère* promised to see that these last souvenirs of the last of the Condés should be given to the princesse de Rohan-Rochefort (*Revue historique*, 1879, June and May; Baron Larrey, *Madame Mère*, Vol. I, p. 340).

grief; she hastened to tell him the cause. On hearing this awful news, Caulaincourt struck his forehead and tore his hair, crying:

" 'Ah! why was I implicated in this terrible affair?' "[1]

Several generals then entered and loudly expressed their delight at the fact that a conspirator against the government of the First Consul had been executed. Poor Mme. Bonaparte, who had hitherto thought it was the proper thing to look depressed because Mme. de Rémusat and Caulaincourt both looked sad and because Eugène, too, seemed depressed, was at a loss to know how to behave and " thought it her duty to excuse herself for her sadness by repeating this very ill-chosen sentence: 'I am only a woman, and I must confess that I feel much inclined to shed tears.' "[2] Hortense appearing at this moment, her mother changed her mind and forgot to shed any more tears during the rest of that day. Nevertheless there was a general feeling of depression all over La Malmaison. The evening was also gloomy. After the dinner, at which Louis and his wife, Eugène, Caulaincourt, Méneval and General Hulin, one of the miserable actors in the drama, assisted, the guests went into Mme. Bonaparte's *salon*. The First Consul seemed deep in thought; he stood with his back to the fireplace; he listened or appeared to be listening to M. de Fontanes, who was reading to him. Mme. Bonaparte, seated at the end of a sofa, said nothing and seemed thinking of nothing, but she must have thought that La Malmaison was a dreadfully dull place: her eyes were still red from the tears shed that morning and on several previous days.

[1] *Mémoires du prince Eugène*, Vol. I, p. 91.
[2] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 330.

Those persons who had come to visit her at La Malmaison had retired to the gallery and conversed to one another under their breath as if there were a dead body in the house.

On hearing certain reports, the First Consul saw that the public must be made to forget the incident at Vincennes as soon as possible. It seemed to him on his return to Paris that the public did not display as much enthusiasm for him as it had done hitherto. He realized that he must do something to rouse the enthusiasm of the populace as he so well knew how, on the battlefield, to rouse victory from her slumber and steal upon the enemy unawares, by suddenly doing something totally unexpected. His friends reasoned with him ; he was advised to wait a little.

" No ! " said he ; " I must make them forget this episode."

And he decided that a State performance should take place at the opera and that he would assist at it, as in days gone by. But let us now hear what an eyewitness of this scene has to say about the matter.

" I accompanied Mme. Bonaparte that evening," says Mme. de Rémusat. " Her carriage was directly behind that of the First Consul. He usually hurried up the grand staircase and entered his box without waiting for his wife, but on this particular occasion he remained in a little *salon* adjoining the box and so gave Mme. Bonaparte time to join him. She was trembling all over ; he was deadly pale. He looked round at us as if trying to guess from the expression depicted upon our countenances how we thought he would be received. He finally entered the box with the air of a soldier marching to

battle. He was cheered as usual, either because his appearance always produced the same effect or else because the police had taken precautions that there should be no note of discord during this gala performance. I was much afraid that the people would not cheer him. And yet when I heard their cheers I could not help feeling a little sad at heart."[1] Mme. de Rémusat tells her story well; this last sentence is full of deep feeling.

So the First Consul was applauded. The royalists, however, declared that the public had accorded him a very cold reception; and one of Josephine's friends, who did not hesitate to betray the confidence of her hostess at the Tuileries and to have her watched by a royalist spy, wrote that, on leaving the opera-house where General Bonaparte and his wife had been received in icy silence, Josephine said:

" I don't know why the public should treat us so coolly, for this is merely a private quarrel between us and the Bourbons."[2]

The *émigré* d'Antraigues' fair correspondent calls this " an unfortunate remark." And yet it was not so very unfortunate after all; for Josephine, by putting it this way, reduced the execution of the unhappy prince to the necessary consequences of a mere *vendetta*. Was not General Bonaparte a Corsican? One thing is certain and that is: that the royalists did not attribute to the execution of the duc d'Enghien all the importance it acquired after the *Restauration*.

Three days after this terrible drama, a pleasant little diversion from the painful incidents and scenes of the

[1] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 347.

[2] Léonce Pingaud, *Un agent secret sous la Révolution et l'Empire : Le comte d'Antraigues*, p. 281.

last few days took place at Saint-Cloud. This event was the christening of the first-born child of Louis and Hortense, who was called Napoleon-Louis. He was born on the 18th *vendémiaire, an XI* (October 10th, 1802). They had waited eighteen months to perform the baptismal ceremony. Our readers may remember that certain scandalous reports had been circulated concerning Hortense and Napoleon. Although Josephine had not believed a word of the abominable calumnies invented by spiteful enemies, they had distressed her, and she was glad when the news of the birth of this child came to put a stop to all these rumours; nevertheless, Josephine's affection for her daughter, an affection which had never been very marked, suffered somewhat, although she knew such stories to be absolutely false, from the tittle-tattle which had reached her ear. She had discussed the subject with the First Consul, who had replied that these reports were probably caused by the nation's desire for him to have a son.[1] This speech was not calculated to pacify the unfortunate woman. Her dread of a divorce increased; and she was so occupied by all these different worries and anxieties, says one of her most devoted friends, that she took but little interest in her daughter's confinement.[2]

The First Consul had already touched upon the question of a divorce on more than one occasion. But this divorce would be productive of some serious results. So, either because he still cared for Josephine, or else "because his affection for her had increased,"[3] or because he did not think that, even supposing he obtained a divorce,

[1] Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, Vol. V, p. 42.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 51.
[3] Chaptal, *Mes souvenirs sur Napoléon*, Vol. V, p. 42.

he would yet be able to obtain the hand of a princess belonging to one of the reigning families in Europe, or even because there happened to be no suitable bride at that time, he announced his intention to adopt the little Napoleon-Louis. Josephine was delighted when she heard her husband express this intention, as such a plan would put at rest many of her fears; for, should her daughter's child be made the continuator of the new dynasty, she would no longer be haunted with the threatening spectre of a divorce.

So this project calmed her fears at least for a time. But she seemed fated never to know peace at home. Lucien's marriage with Mme. Jouberthon made some commotion among the members of the Bonaparte family. Lucien had lost his first wife, the good, gentle Christine Boyer; Josephine had actually had the impudence to assert that Lucien had poisoned his wife in order to get rid of her: the kind-hearted Josephine was not particularly kind-hearted to those she did not like; she and her daughter Hortense had both suffered from calumny, and Josephine was not high-minded enough to be able to resist the temptation to pay her enemies back in their own coin. The First Consul wished to choose a wife for his brother Lucien, and he hoped to find a suitable person for him among the members of some German family of princely birth. But as Lucien had only just buried his poor Christine, and as he could think of nothing but the mausoleum which he wished to erect to her memory, Bonaparte did not hurry. However, as weeks and months passed by, Lucien began to try and forget his deep grief. He was invited one day to a pleasure-party given by M. Alexandre de Laborde in his *château* at Méréville. There

were many guests. While there, he met a young and pretty woman, Mme. Jouberthon, who was not a widow at that time, but who, like Lucien, wanted to be amused. She was the divorced wife of a bankrupt stockbroker who had been packed off to the colonies by his friends, where he soon died.

Mme. Jouberthon was extremely wealthy; she was a very intimate friend of the tribune Chabot and Mme. Chabot, so she and Lucien immediately became great friends and he soon after made her his mistress. As she became a widow about the same time, she expressed a wish for Lucien Bonaparte to marry her. She was very pretty and Lucien was very much in love: he promised to do whatever she wanted him to do. However, Lucien could not marry without the consent of his powerful brother, and the latter let him see that he did not intend to give it to him. What did Lucien do then? He secretly married his mistress—not so secretly, however, but that the First Consul did not hear of it. The news was told him at Saint-Cloud, at the conclusion of an impromptu concert. His wrath was terrible to behold. Mme. Bonaparte, seeing her husband in such a fearful temper, was afraid that something dreadful had happened; she came up to him with her poor painted face distorted with terror and begged him to tell her what was the matter. When she heard what had happened, she gave a sigh of relief as if to say: "Oh! is that all? What a fright you gave me!"[1]

The First Consul had good cause to be angry. Not only was he deeply wounded by this *mésalliance*, he who had such very strong family affection and who now saw

[1] Th. Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 315.

THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE
From the collection of A. M. Broadley, Esq.

that his brother did not return that affection, but he perceived that he would lose an opportunity to carry out his plans for contracting royal marriages for his relatives, marriages which, in future, were to form part and parcel of his huge plans for obtaining a footing in the principal European royal families. He made Murat and Cambacérès try to persuade his brother to break off this marriage, which he declared was not valid ; Lucien, who was considered very independent because, instead of allowing his brother to settle everything for him, he had allowed his wife to get the upper hand, was proof against temptations and threats. Napoleon then expressed a desire to have an interview with him. Lucien went to Saint-Cloud, and the two brothers had a long conversation, which lasted until nearly midnight. Bonaparte came out looking very distressed : his brother would not give in. He sank down upon a chair and covered his face with his hands ; he seemed overwhelmed. Josephine tried to comfort him.

" You are a good woman to take Lucien's part," said he. He arose, went up to her and put his left arm round her waist while Josephine laid her head on his shoulder ; her husband began to stroke her hair. Josephine was at her best when she played the part which belongs to every woman worthy of the name, when she comforted her husband and when she dried his tears, and this task she accomplished with all her usual charm and sweetness. She consoled him for the blow dealt by her enemy Lucien ; by petting and consoling her husband and by letting him see how kind-hearted she was, she did a very clever thing and revenged herself into the bargain. Bonaparte then repeated his conversation with Lucien.

"It is hard," added he in concluding, "to find a member of one's own family so obstinately opposed to one's plans. So I see I must make up my mind to stand alone, and only rely upon my own efforts! Ah! well, I must learn to look after myself, and you, Josephine, you shall be my comforter!"[1]

And when he began to call Mme. Jouberthon bad names, Josephine said in her sweet, caressing voice:

"My friend, remember that she is a woman."[2]

Josephine, according to Lucien, was not exactly broken-hearted to see her brother-in-law and her new sister-in-law Alexandrine, the widow Jouberthon, depart.

Lucien adds: "Had Alexandrine been less pretty—and I am sure mama thought the same—Mme. Josephine would have been more anxious to persuade her husband to keep me near him."

That is quite possible; to tell the truth, such jealousy is all too common among womenfolk; and Lucien, in order to flatter Alexandrine's vanity and his own pride at having a wife handsome enough to make the beautiful Josephine jealous, need not have taken such a spiteful pleasure in pointing it out. But Josephine was surrounded not only by her sisters-in-law Caroline and Pauline, Pauline who was called the most beautiful woman of her time,[3] without counting Mme. de Rémusat whose friend she was, but by far too many young and pretty women not to be jealous if she had been inclined to be so. But she was not jealous by nature.

Lucien gives her another slap in his own particular way—as if she could read it—when he wrote: "I really

[1] Mme. de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, Vol. I.
[2] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, Vol. VII, p. 105.
[3] *Mémoires du chancelier Pasquier*, Vol. I, p. 403.

don't know why she was jealous, for she was old enough to be Alexandrine's mother."[1]

Lucien reverts on more than one occasion to his sister-in-law's supposed jealousy. The consul Lebrun, having praised Mme. Lucien several times in Josephine's presence, the latter accused the good old man of being in love with her. As for Chaptal, who succeeded Lucien as Minister of the Interior, it seems that he said one day to Josephine in order to curry favour with her, that Mme. Jouberthon " must have been dreadfully cunning to be able to make such an inconstant fellow as Lucien Bonaparte marry her." The consul Lebrun was present while these little remarks were being made ; he took the fair widow's part and retorted in rather a sharp tone that " he had every reason to believe that this young woman's mind was as beautiful as her face."[2] We do not know what Lebrun's reasons were for thinking so well of a woman whose past promised nothing good for the future ; but subsequent events proved that he was right. When once Mme. Jouberthon was married to Lucien Bonaparte, nobody was ever able to say a word against her ; she was a good wife to her husband, whom she ruled, and an excellent mother to his numerous children.[3]

[1] Th. Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 444.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 95.

[3] The sequel to *The Wife of General Bonaparte* is entitled : *The Empress Josephine.*

INDEX

INDEX

Abrantès, duchesse d', 62, 65, 124, 129–30, 143, 159, 169, 186, 193–4, 209, 211, 241, 252, 254, 275, 286, 289, 291–2, 305–6, 324; notes, 11, 16, 51, 63, 76, 97, 99, 104, 119, 120, 122, 130, 134, 138, 147, 155, 157, 160, 164, 176, 181, 184, 208, 212, 214, 217, 225, 231–2, 237, 250, 253, 271, 280, 294, 328, 329, 332, 339–40, 362
Alexander the Great, 38
Alexander, Emperor of Russia, 234
Ali, 182
Alvinzi, 113
Andrieux, François-Guillaume, 309
" Angot, Mme.", 8
Antiochus, 222
Antraigues, comte d', 118–9, 264; notes, 265, 331, 357
Antraigues, comtesse d'. *See* La Saint-Huberty.
Armée d'Angleterre, 146
— d'Egypte, 204
— d'Italie, vi, 26–8, 51, 60–1, 63–4, 96–9, 103, 114, 125, 157, 200, 249–50, 261, 344
— d'Orient, 148
— du Rhin, 200, 249–50
Arnault, Antoine, 66, 77, 132–3, 143–4, 152, 187, 309; notes, 57, 60, 62, 67, 78, 124, 140, 145, 188, 330
Artémise, the, 204
Artois, comte d'. *See* Charles X.
Aubenas, Joseph, vi.
Augereau, Pierre-François-Charles, 131, 208
Auguié, Mme., 254
Augustine, Saint, 48
Augustus, Emperor, 315
Avrillon, Mlle., 241; note, 328
Baciocchi, Felice, 121, 124
Baciocchi, Mme. *See* Elisa Bonaparte
Bailleul, J. C., 58–9; notes, 28, 30, 143
Barante, baron de, notes, 30, 215
Barbier-Valbonne, Mme., 327
Barras, Paul, 4, 7, 9, 11–4, 18, 22, 26–8, 31, 35, 40, 42, 45, 106, 121, 135, 147–8, 156, 162, 190, 192, 246
Baudin, M., 172
Beauharnais, Alexandre de, 6; 22, 30, 59, 121, 129, 269, 295, note 16
Beauharnais, Emilie de, 148–9, 217, 249, 288, 291, 324
Beauharnais, Eugène de, 30, 35, 59, 112, 114, 148, 152, 158, 163, 169–71, 174–5, 180–2, 184, 189, 206, 216, 273, 288–9, 297, 337–8, 354–5
Beauharnais, Fanny de, note, 40
Beauharnais, Hortense de, 12, 41, 54, 112, 150–1, 153, 163, 180–2, 186–7, 200, 206, 217, 224–30, 232–44, 249, 254–5, 266–7, 275, 289, 297, 337–8, 352, 355, 358–9
Beauharnais, Mlle. de, 217
Beaulieu, 112
Beauregard, Costa de, note, 111
Benezech, M. de, 254–5
Benezech, Mme. de, 226
Berlier, M., 201
Berquin, Arnaud, vii
Berthier, Alexandre, 92, 96, 115, 152, 171, 201, 209–10, 212, 280
Bessières, Jean-Baptiste, 206, 216, 256, 327
Bessières, Mme., 253, 255
Bitaubé, M., note, 40
Bodin, M., 157

Bonaparte, Caroline, 124, 148, 151, 184, 203, 205–8, 217, 244, 254, 282, 305–6, 309, 327–8, 351, 362
Bonaparte, Christine, 184, 194, 231
Bonaparte, Elisa, 121–2, 124, 184, 224, 240, 309, 338
Bonaparte, Jérôme, 184, 186, 226, 229
Bonaparte, Joseph, 34, 53, 66, 69; 97, 124, 146, 153, 156, 168, 176, 201, 239, 308–11, 315, notes 87–9
Bonaparte, Julie, 194
Bonaparte, Letizia (Madame Mère), 34, 38, 68, 108, 121–4, 159, 185, 193–5, 252, 273, 310, 342, 354, 362
Bonaparte, Louis, 124, 148–9, 173, 235, 244, 352, 355, 358
Bonaparte, Lucien, 34, 96, 99, 121, 146, 176, 181, 184–7, 200–2, 221–31, 239, 269, 271–2, 302, 308–11, 315–6, 339–41, 359–63; notes, 18, 25, 88
Bonaparte, Napoléon, Emperor of the French, 7–10, 13–6, 21 *et passim*
Bonaparte, Napoleon-Louis, 337, 352, 358–9
Bonardi, M., 218
Bonheur, Rosa, 337
Bottot, M., 135
Boufflers, M. and Mme. de, 309
Bouilly, Jean-Nicolas, vii
Bourbon family, 263–4, 268–9
Boulay (de la Meurthe), 201
Bourrienne, Louis-Antoine de, 24–6, 35–6, 114–5, 143–4, 146, 149, 151, 153–4, 167, 183, 187, 192, 200, 202, 204, 206–9, 211, 234–5, 237, 239, 241, 266–7, 329, 331, 333–4, 336
Boyer, Christine. *See* Christine Bonaparte
Bragance, duchesse de, 273
Bricard, M., 133
Broglie, duc de, notes, 4, 13
Brosses, president des, note, 116
Bruix, 190

Cabinet noir, Le, 240
Cæsar, Julius, 38, 226
Caffarelli, M., 256
Calmelet, M., 40
Cambacérès, 201, 214, 255, 361
Campan, Mme., 41, 149, 242
Canino, princesse de, 273
Capelle, M., 240
" Carabas, marquis de," 286
Carbon, François, 329
Carnot, Lazare, 27–9, 53, 139
Carreau, Julie, 41
Casti, M., 309
Catherine, Empress of Russia, 134
Caulaincourt, Armand, 16, 256, 347, 355
Ceracchi, 289
Céré, M. de, 278–81
Chabot, M. and Mme., 361
Champigny, minister, 224
Chappe, Claude, note, 173
Chaptal, Jean-Antoine, 224, 276, 358, 363
Charavay, Collection, note, 53
Charles, Hippolyte, 96–9, 103, 111, 125, 157–63, 172, 176, 181, 204, 285, 342, note 16
Charles VI of Spain, 227
Charles X of France, 267, 347
Chauvelin, M. and Mme., 224, 309
Clary, Mme., 224
Classen, M., 218
Cobentzel, Louis de, 134, 309
Cobentzel, Philippe de, 134
Colbert, Auguste, 303, 352
Colbert-Chabanais, marquis de, 352
Collot, M., 176–8, 182–3, 205
Concordat, 304
Constant, notes, 16, 151, 223, 239, 241
Consulte, 244
Copons, Mme. de, 331
Corneille, Pierre, 52
Corvisart, Dr., 342
Coston, M. de, notes, 21, 23, 26
Cramayel, M., 256
Cresnay, M., 265
Crény, Mme. de, 329
Croisier, M., 114
Cromwell, Oliver, 226

Damas, Mme. de, 11
Davout, Léopold-Claude-Etienne, 256, 339
Dazincourt, M., 4

Defermon, M., 201
Denon, Dominique-Vivant, 120
Desaix, Louis-Charles-Antoine, 135
Devaisnes, Mme., 281
Didelot, M., 256, 288
Dorat, Claude-Joseph, note, 40
Dubois, M., 224, 332
Dubuquoy, Mlle., 275
Duchesnois, Mlle., 317
Dufort de Cheverny, comte, notes, 143, 285
Duplan, M., 302
Durand, General, 241
Duroc, Gérard, 114, 149, 234, 236–7, 241, 254, 312, 327, 339
Duroc, Mme., 254, 305

Elliot, 114
Enghien, duc d', 347–8, 350–4, 357
"Escarbagnas, comtesse d'," 286
Etruria, king and queen of, 128

Faudoas, Mlle. de. *See* duchesse de Rovigo
Ficquelmont, M. de, 135
Fier, the, 39; note, 152
Flachat, Compagnie, 213
Foncier, M., 209, 212
Fontanelle, Colonel, 256
Fontanes, M. de, 355
Fontenay, Mme. de, 4
Fontenelle, 52
Forfait, minister, 201
Fortuné, 76–8, 100, 131–3
Fouché, Joseph, 187–8, 201–3, 213, 329–33
Fourès, Pauline, 151, 169–71, 337
Fréron, 5, 122–3

Gallo, marquis de, 134
Garat, Jean-Pierre, 5, 327
Gaudin, M., 201
Georges, Mlle., 317, 321
Germon, Mme., 141
Girardin, Brégy, 309
Girardin, Stanislas, 142, 224, 309, 341; notes, 141, 223, 336
Giustiniani, M. de, 218
Glück, Christoph Willibald, 5
Godoy, Manuel, 227
Gohier, M. and Mme., 159–64, 174, 185–94
Goldsmith, Lewis, 167
Goncourt, Edmond de, notes, 5, 6, 40
Gontaut, Charles de, 238
Grant, Mme., 165, 324–6
Grassini, 96
Gros, Antoine-Jean, 102
Guiche, duchesse de, 267–9

Hainguerlot, Mme. d', 6
Hamelin, Mme., 6, 10, 120, 247
Harville, Mme. d', 250
Hautefort, marquis d', 165
Haydn, Joseph, 327
Hérisson, comte d', note, 240
Hervas, Mlle. *See* Menara
Hoche, Lazare, 7, 10, 16, 29; notes, 15, 16
Hostein, Mme., 31–2
Hozier, M. d', 346
Houchin, Mme., 192
Houdetot, Mme. d', 278
Hulin, M., 355
Hulot, Mme., 282–4, 306–8

Idalie, 11, 45
Isabella, Infanta of Spain, 227
Isabey, Jean-Baptiste, 154, 272
Istrie, duchesse d'. *See* Bessières.
Ivan, 114

Jaucourt, M., 224
Josephine, Empress of the French: her widowhood, 7–15; wishes to marry again, 21; becomes engaged to General Bonaparte, 25; marries him, 39–42; indifference towards her husband, 42; starts to join him, 68; arouses his jealousy, 90; is forgiven, 100; dislike of her husband's relations, 121–5; her portrait, 129–31; returns to Paris, 137; is left alone in France, 154; amuses herself during her husband's absence, 158; begins to dread a divorce, 166; makes use of her children, 181; is forgiven once more, 184; goes to dwell at the Tuileries, 199; wishes to be married in church, 245; intrigues, 269; extravagance, 295; indulgence, 308; goes to Belgium, 312; jealous fears,

315; narrow escape, 327; spies upon her husband, 333; question of heredity, 337; her hatred of Lucien, 340; grief at the murder of the duc d'Enghien, 347; more fears of a divorce, 359
Jouberthon, Alexandrine, 359–60, 362–3; note, 25
Julie, 115
Julien, Mlle., 290
Jung, Th., 188, 121, 146, 151, 233; notes, 18, 23, 25–6, 34, 145, 152, 157, 176, 203, 225, 227–8, 230, 240,248, 272–3, 311, 316, 331, 339, 344, 350, 361, 363
Junot, Andoche, 60–1, 63–6, 68–9, 97, 114, 123, 125–7, 152, 165–7, 169, 173, 183, 272, 286–7, 345
Junot, Mme. *See* Mme. d'Abrantès.

Karl, archduke of Austria, 113
Kaunitz, M. de, 134
Kopp, M., 218
Kotzebue, note, 302

Laborde, Alexandre de, 359
La Bruyère, Jean de, 75
La Fontaine, Jean, 129
Lamarque, General, 31–2; note, 206
Lamartine, Alphonse de, vi, 181
Lameth, Mme. de, 249
Lange, Mlle., 45
Lannes, Jean, 146, 152, 206–8, 216, 224, 256, 272, 327, 339
Lannes, Mme., 253, 255
Laplace, M. de, 201, 221
Laplace, Mme. de, 250
La Revellière-Lépeaux, 28; notes, 11, 29
La Rouchefoucauld, Alexandre de, 47, 224
Larrey, baron, notes, 38, 108, 354
Lasalle, General, 120
Lauriston, Alexandre Jacques Bernard Law, 327
Lauriston, Mme. de, 250, 257–8
Lavalette, Marie Chamans de, 148–52, 245, 324, 342
Lavalette, Mme. de. *See* Emilie de Beauharnais
Lebrun, Charles François, 214, 217, 255–6, 266, 363; note, 41
Lebrun, fils, 256, 327
Leclerc, Charles-Victor, 111, 123, 157
Leclerc, Mme. *See* Pauline Bonaparte
Lecoulteux de Canteleu, M. and Mme, 154
Lecourbe, M. and Mme., 224
Lemarrois, 40, 114, 256
Leuchtenberg, prince de *See* Eugène de Beauharnais
Lévy, Arthur, 167; notes, 31, 43, 53, 59, 160, 165, 168
Lille, comte de. *See* Louis XVIII
Livea, 315
Longueville, hôtel de, 10
Louis XV, 13, 42, 130
Louis XVI, 42, 62, 116, 118, 130, 255, 258, 263–4, 266, 347
Louis XVIII, 264, 266–7; note, 265
Louise, Mlle., 69–70, 125–6
Luçay, Mme. de, 250, 257–8

Macbeth, 148
Mailly de Château-Renault, Mme. de, 6
Manini, doge, 133
Manthey, M., 218
Marbot, General, note, 135
Marceau, François-Severin, 29
Maret, Mme., 249
Marie-Antoinette, 209, 254, 275
Marie de Medici, 219
Marie-Louise, 257
Marmont, Auguste Viesse, 18, 49, 53, 60, 70–2, 113–4, 149–50, 309
Marmont, Mme., 149, 254, 305
Masséna, André, 213, 220
Masson, Frédéric, 243, 337; notes, 299, 338
Maury, Cardinal, 339
Mécanique céleste, La, 221
Melas, M., 213
Menara, Hervas de, 305
Menara, Mlle. de. *See* Mme. Duroc
Méneval, baron de, 36–8, 244, 325, 355; notes, 223, 226, 239, 257, 275, 287, 324
Merfeld, comte de, 135

Merlin, Mme., 142
Michelet, Jules, 219
Miot de Melito, 115, 224, 245, 309; notes, 117, 202, 223, 228
Miot de Melito, Mme., 329
Molière, Jean Baptiste, 101; note, 286
Monge, Gaspard, 201
Montaigne, Michel, vi, 26
Montesquiou, Charles Secondat, 266
Montesson, marquis de, 270
Montesson, Mme. de, 270–2
Montgaillard, comte de, note, 238
Montmorency, Mathieu de, 309
Moreau, Jean-Victor, 29, 208, 283, 324, 346, 351
Moreau, Mme., 281–3
Mortier, Mme., 253, 255
Moscati, M., 110
Mounier, baron, note, 241
Muiron, M., 114
Mun, comte de, 229, 241
Murat, Joachim, 65–6, 68, 102–6, 114, 152, 203–8, 216, 226, 244, 309, 339, 345, 351–2, 361
Murat, Mme. *See* Caroline Bonaparte
Musquiez, marquis de, 218

Nansouty, General, 12, 260
Nansouty, Mme. de, 260
Narbonne, Louis de, 270
Navailles, Mme. de, 6
Ney, Mme., 254
Noailles, Just de, 163

Orient, the, 152–3, 204
Orléans, duc d', 270, 272
Orléans, family d', 271
Ossian, 44
Ouvrard, J. C., note, 31, 331

Pasquier, Etienne, 12–3; notes, 242, 326, 333, 351, 353, 362
Pasquier, Mme., 12
Paulo, comte de, 238
Peace, prince of. *See* Manuel Godoy
Permon, Mme. Panoria, 165, 193, 253
Perregaux, Mlle. *See* Mme. Marmont
Perron, le, 5
Philippe-Egalité, 270
Pichegru, Charles, 346
Pingaud, Léonce, notes, 119, 265, 331, 357
Pius VI, Pope, 110, 128, 155
Polastron, comtesse de, 267
Polignac, M. de, 346
Pomiès, M., 200
Pomone, the, 151; note, 152
Portalis, M. de, 329
Potemkin, Grigorij Alexandrowitsch, 134

Raguideau, Maître, 35–8, 199
Raguse, duc de. *See* Marmont
Rapp, 256, 288–9, 327–8, 342
Réal, Minister, 224, 329
Récamier, Mme., 62; note, 157
Reinhardt, Charles Frédéric, 201
Reitzenstein, baron de, 218
Rémusat, M. de, 12, 256, 259, 321
Rémusat, Charles de, 260
Rémusat, Mme. de, 11, 87, 129, 156, 210–1, 218, 229, 241, 257–60, 300–2, 311–3, 315–6, 325, 332–50, 352–3, 355–7, 362; notes, 15, 95, 163, 250, 261, 264–5, 282
Renaudin, Mme., 299
Rétif de la Bretonne, note, 40
Rewbell, Jean-François-Antoine, 157, 163, 229
Rivière, M. de, 346
Robespierre, Maximilien, 32
Rœderer, M., 115, 226, 309–10, 329–31
Roger-Ducos, M., 192
Rohan-Rochefort, Charlotte de, 354
Roure, Scipion de, 265
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 24, 115
Roustan, 318
Rovigo, duchesse de. *See* Mme. Savary

Sabran, Mme. de, 309
Saint-Amand, Imbert de, vi; notes, 46, 47, 56
Saint-Fargeau, Mme. Lepelletier de, 6, 8
Saint-Huberty, La, 118–19
Saint-Jean d'Angély, Regnault de, 120, 152, 201, 253, 309, 329

Saint-Preux, 24
Santerre, Claude, 32
Savary, René, 256, 339, 353–4
Savary, Mme., 253, 255, 305
Schimmelpenninck, M. de, 218
Ségur, Philippe de, notes, 24, 49
Serbelloni, duca di, 71 ; note, 72, 218
Sieyès, Emanuel Joseph, 185, 192
Signeul, M., 218
Sismondi, Jean Charles Simande de, 102
Soubise, Charles de Rohan, 13
Soult, Nicolas-Jean, 256, 261
Staël, Germaine Necker, 6, 8, 96, 138, 143–6, 229, 309
Steibelt, 327
Stendhal Beyle, 9, 95–6, 103 ; notes, v, 99, 107, 118
Suchet, Louis-Gabriel, 220
Sulkowski, Paul, count of, 114, 146, 152

Talhouët, Mme. de, 250, 257–8, 312
Talma, François, 41, 67, 148
Talleyrand, Charles de Périgord, 115, 127, 138–42, 144, 161–4, 190, 201, 245, 251–2, 271, 296, 324–6, 330
Tallien, Jean, 7
Tallien, Jéanne, 4, 7–11, 13–4, 18, 20, 22, 40, 45, 62, 64–5, 120, 156, 161–2, 204, 247, 344
Tascher de la Pagerie family, 39, 238
Tercier, General, 39, 238–9
Thélusson, hôtel, 10
Thibaudeau, M., 185 ; note, 248
Thiébault, M., 28, 95, 103 ; notes, 14, 29, 213
Thiers, Louis-Adolphe, 219, 335–6
Thoumas, General, 303
Tissot, P. F., 28
Tivoli, 11, 45
Trénis, M., 5
Trévise, duchesse de. *See* Mme. Mortier
Turpin, Captain, note, 152

Vanakre, note, 16
Verdier, Mme., 151
Vergennes, Gravier de, 12, 258
Vergennes, Mme. de, 12, 258–9
Vestris, Gaetano Apollino Baldassare, 5
Virgil, 341
Visconti, Mme., 96, 209
Vitrolles, baron de, 266
Volney, Constantin-François, 228

Wilhelmina, princess of Baden, 164
Wurmser, Dagobert Siegmund, 81, 84, 113, 204

Zeltner, M., 218

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